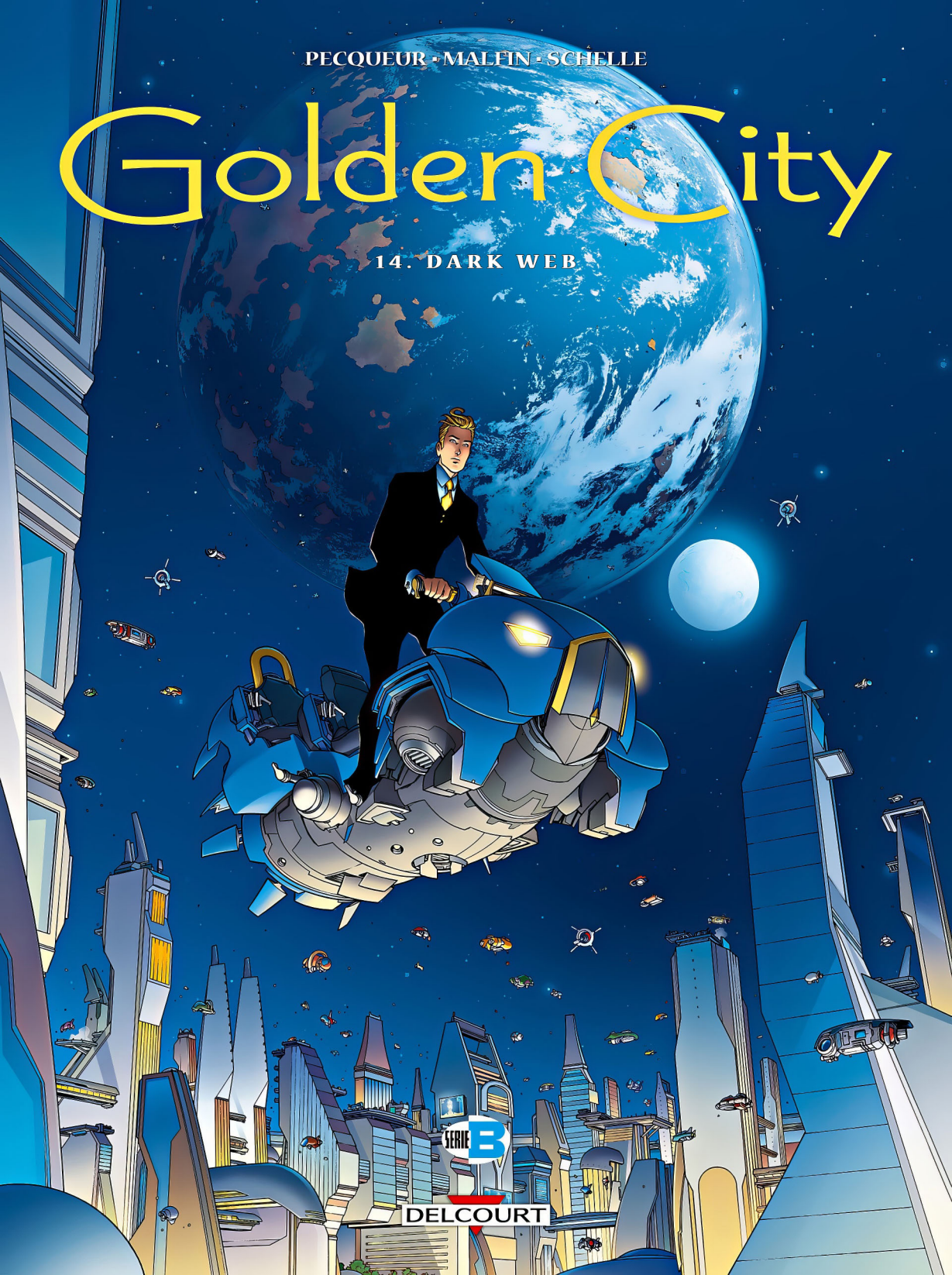


PECQUEUR • MALFIN • SCHELLE

Golden City

14. DARK WEB



SERIE **B**

DEL COURT

Golden City

14. DARK WEB



LONESTAR

Story

Daniel PECQUEUR

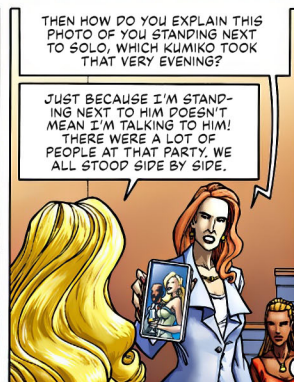
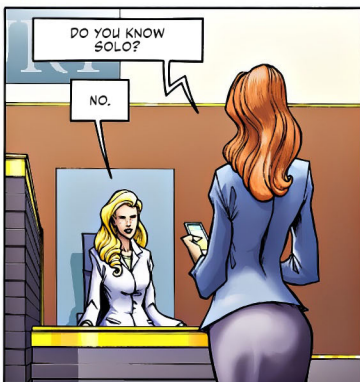
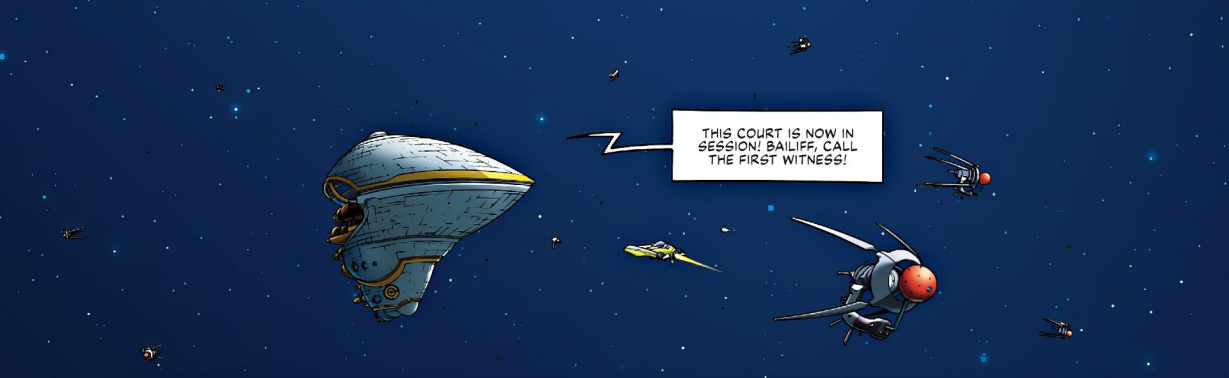
Art

Nicolas MALFIN

Color

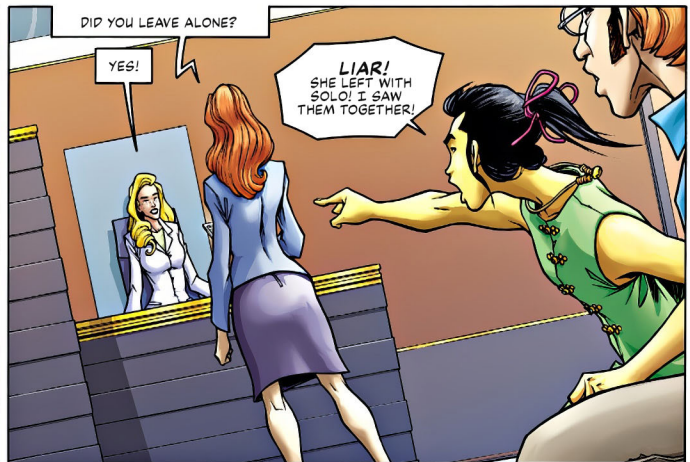
Pierre SCHELLE

DEL COURT





BESIDES, I DIDN'T STAY THERE FOR LONG, ABOUT HALF AN HOUR, AT MOST. THEN I LEFT. I WENT TO KARL'S ROOM TO CELEBRATE HIS BIRTHDAY WITH SOME BUDDIES.



DID YOU LEAVE ALONE?

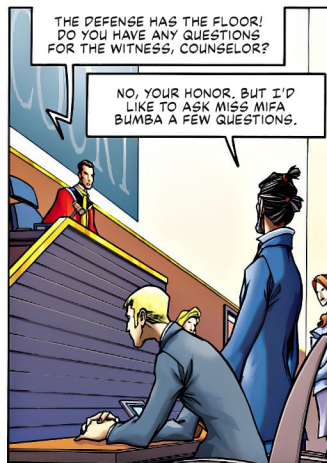
YES!

LIAR! SHE LEFT WITH SOLO! I SAW THEM TOGETHER!



MISS, YOU ARE NOT PERMITTED TO TALK DURING THE HEARING UNLESS YOU HAVE PERMISSION! PLEASE BE SEATED!

TOC!
TOC!



THE DEFENSE HAS THE FLOOR! DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS FOR THE WITNESS, COUNSELOR?

NO, YOUR HONOR, BUT I'D LIKE TO ASK MISS MIFA BUMBA A FEW QUESTIONS.



PLEASE TAKE THE STAND, MISS.



DO YOU SWEAR TO TELL THE TRUTH, THE WHOLE TRUTH, AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH, SO HELP YOU GOD?

I SWEAR.



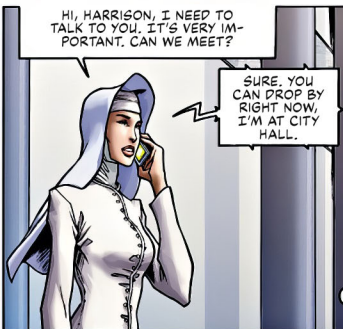
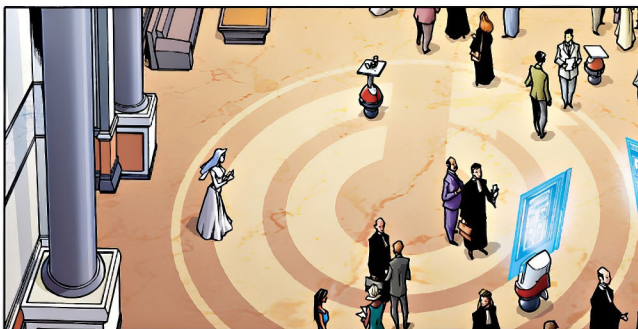
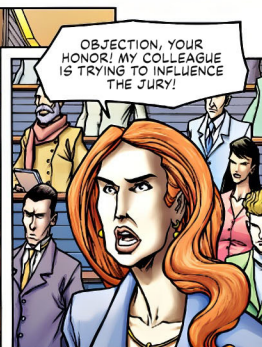
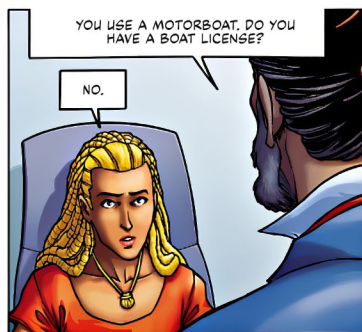
WHAT'S YOUR OCCUPATION?

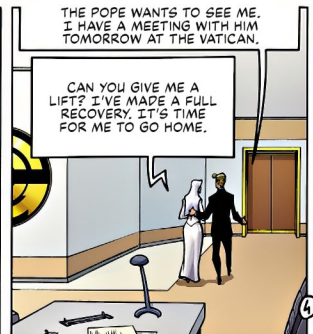
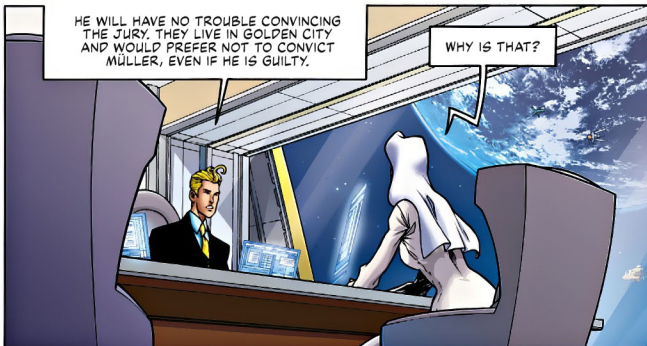
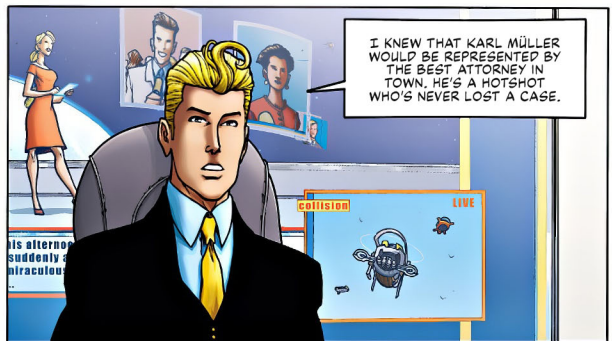
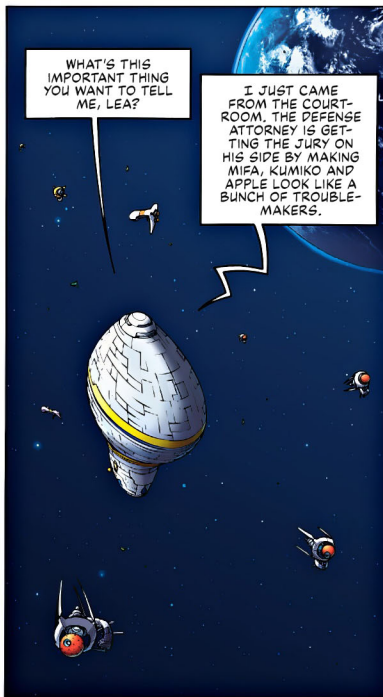
I DON'T HAVE ONE.

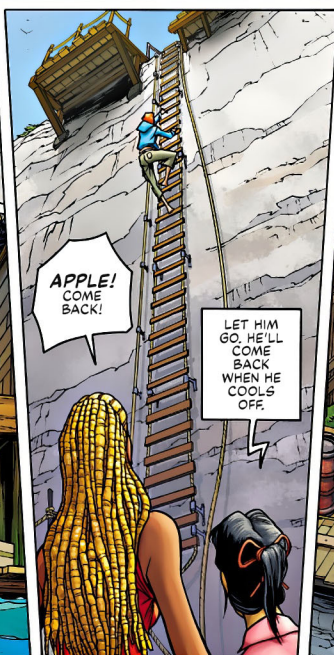
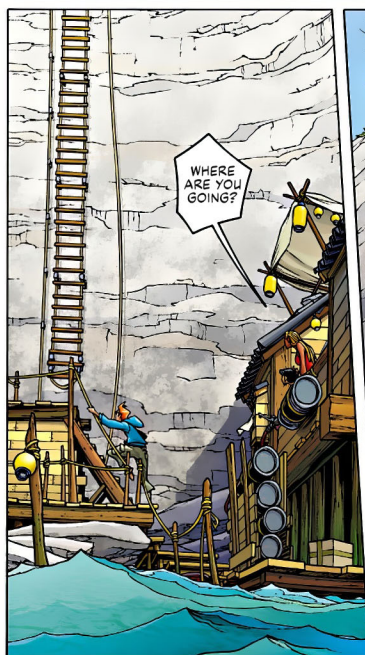
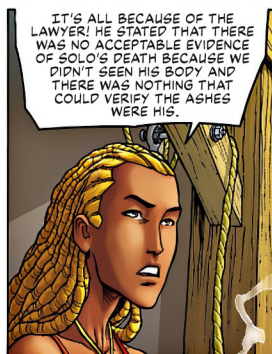
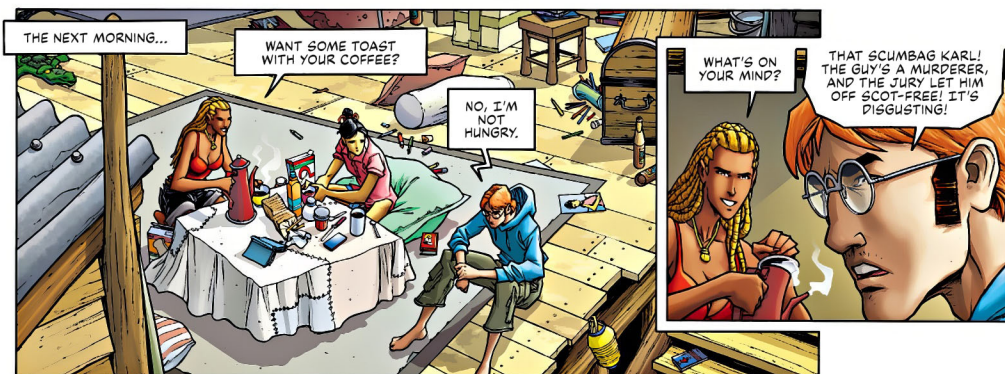


DON'T YOU WORK? WHY NOT? IS IT TOO EXHAUSTING? YOU PREFER STEALING?

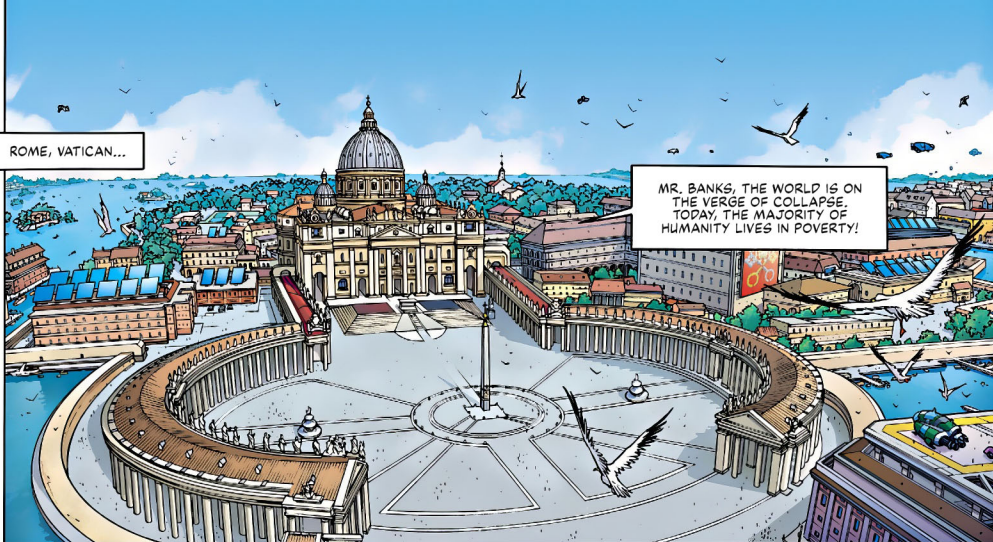
APPLE, KUMIKO AND I ARE NOT THIEVES! WE EAT THE FISH WE CATCH AND THE VEGETABLES WE GROW.







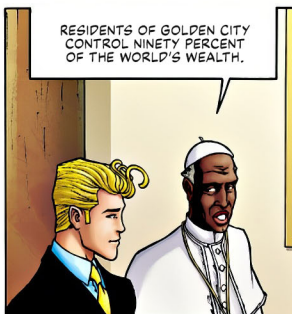
ROME, VATICAN...



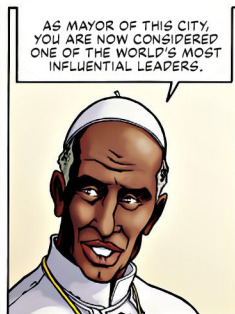
MR. BANKS, THE WORLD IS ON THE VERGE OF COLLAPSE. TODAY, THE MAJORITY OF HUMANITY LIVES IN POVERTY!



MILLIONS OF MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN SLEEP ON THE STREETS. PROTESTS AGAINST SOCIAL INEQUALITY ARE TAKING PLACE ALL AROUND THE WORLD.



RESIDENTS OF GOLDEN CITY CONTROL NINETY PERCENT OF THE WORLD'S WEALTH.

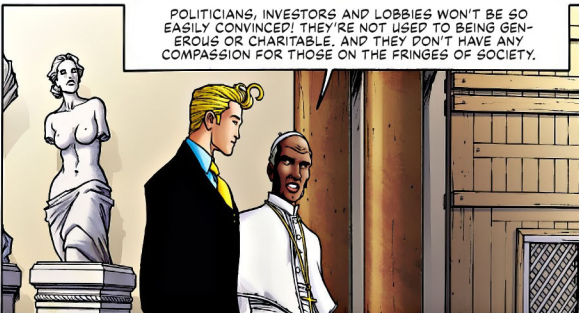


AS MAYOR OF THIS CITY, YOU ARE NOW CONSIDERED ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST INFLUENTIAL LEADERS.

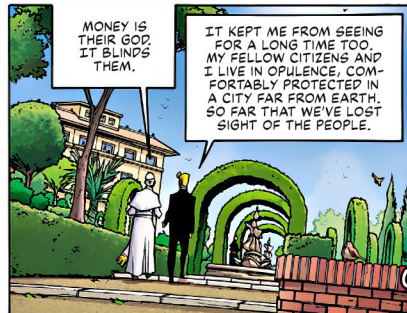


IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT I WANTED TO MEET YOU. I KNOW YOU ARE A MAN OF STRONG WILL AND, IN MY HUMBLE OPINION, THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN BRING ABOUT A CHANGE SO THAT THE MOST DEPRIVED CAN FINALLY HAVE A DECENT LIFE.

I'LL TRY, YOUR HOLINESS, BUT IT WON'T BE EASY!

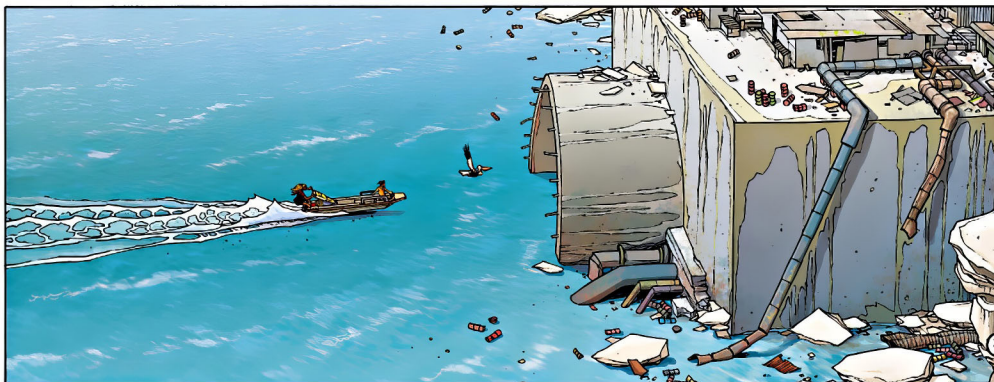
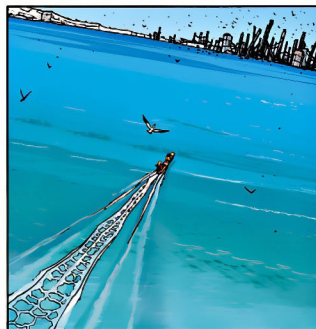
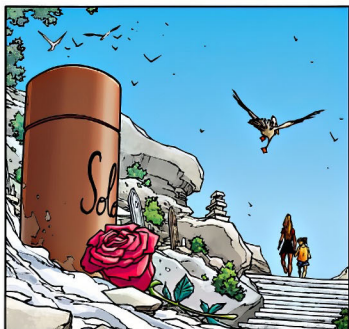
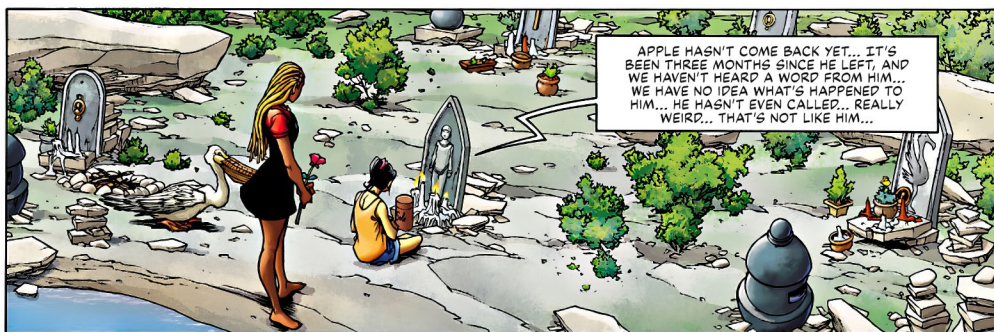


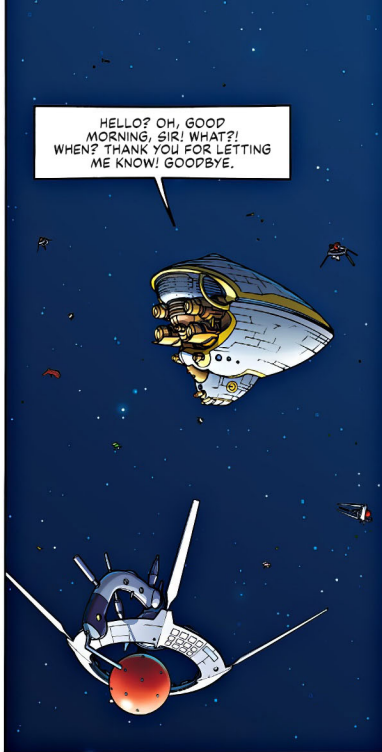
POLITICIANS, INVESTORS AND LOBBIES WON'T BE SO EASILY CONVINCED! THEY'RE NOT USED TO BEING GENEROUS OR CHARITABLE, AND THEY DON'T HAVE ANY COMPASSION FOR THOSE ON THE FRINGES OF SOCIETY.



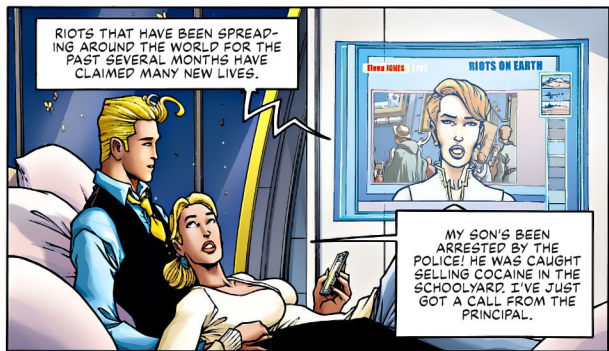
MONEY IS THEIR GOD, IT BLINDS THEM.

IT KEPT ME FROM SEEING FOR A LONG TIME TOO. MY FELLOW CITIZENS AND I LIVE IN OPULENCE, COMFORTABLY PROTECTED IN A CITY FAR FROM EARTH, SO FAR THAT WE'VE LOST SIGHT OF THE PEOPLE.





HELLO? OH, GOOD MORNING, SIR! WHAT?! WHEN? THANK YOU FOR LETTING ME KNOW! GOODBYE.



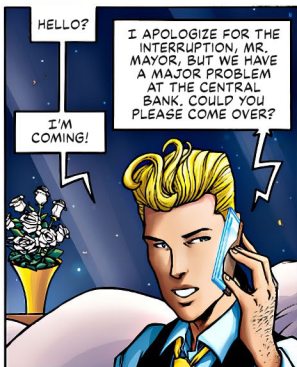
RIOTS THAT HAVE BEEN SPREADING AROUND THE WORLD FOR THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS HAVE CLAIMED MANY NEW LIVES.

MY SON'S BEEN ARRESTED BY THE POLICE! HE WAS CAUGHT SELLING COCAINE IN THE SCHOOLYARD. I'VE JUST GOT A CALL FROM THE PRINCIPAL.



GO PICK HIM UP AT THE POLICE STATION. AND BRING HIM BACK HERE SO YOU CAN KEEP AN EYE ON HIM AND MAKE HIM STOP DOING THIS CRAP.

DESPITE PLEAS FOR PEACE FROM INTERNATIONAL LEADERS, FIGHTING IS INTENSIFYING WITH EACH DAY.



HELLO?

I APOLOGIZE FOR THE INTERRUPTION, MR. MAYOR, BUT WE HAVE A MAJOR PROBLEM AT THE CENTRAL BANK. COULD YOU PLEASE COME OVER?

I'M COMING!



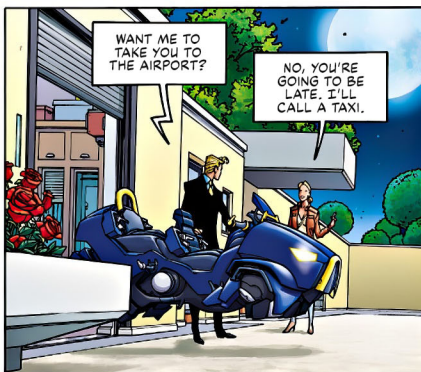
I'M GOING TO CALL THE AIRPORT TO BOOK A SPACE SHUTTLE.

PLEASE, TAKE MINE.



THANK YOU FOR LETTING MY SON STAY WITH US.

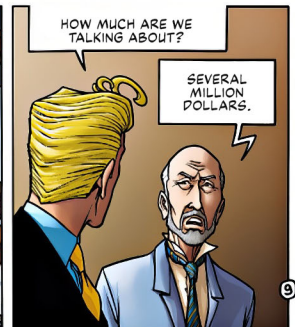
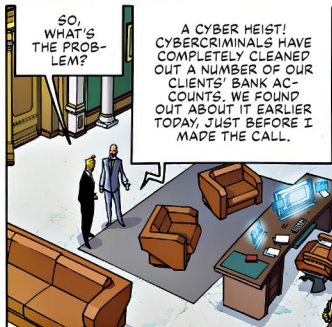
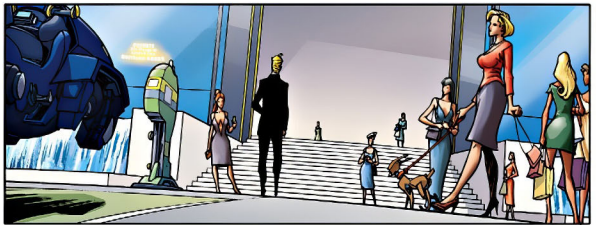
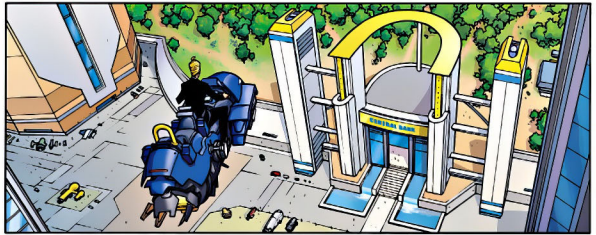
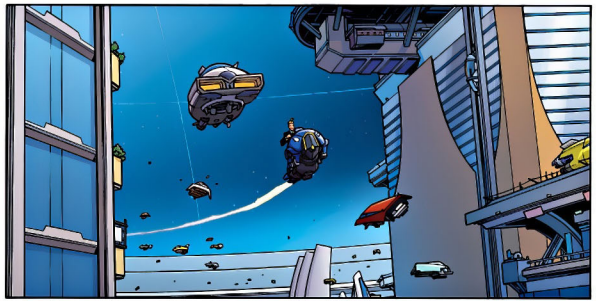
IT'S THE BEST THING TO DO. IF HE NEEDS TO GO TO REHAB, HE CAN DO IT HERE IN GOLDEN CITY.

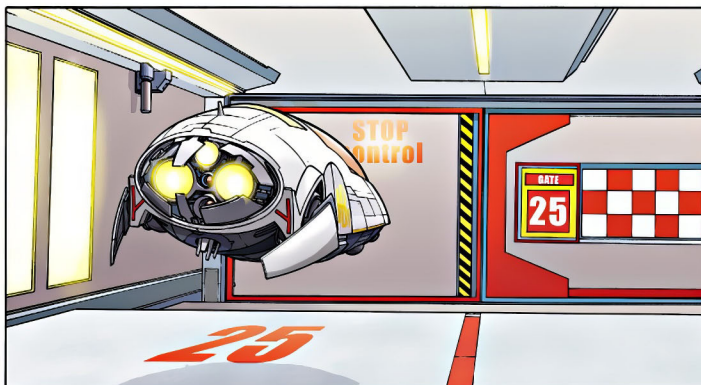
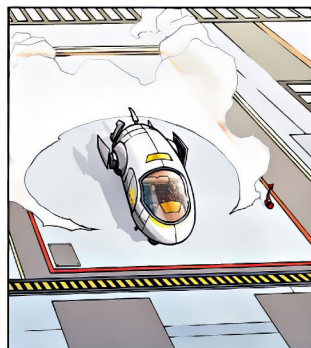
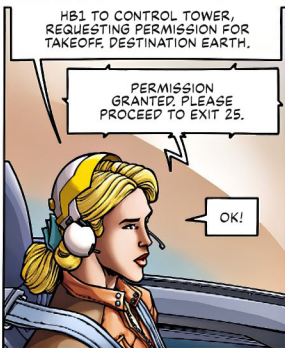
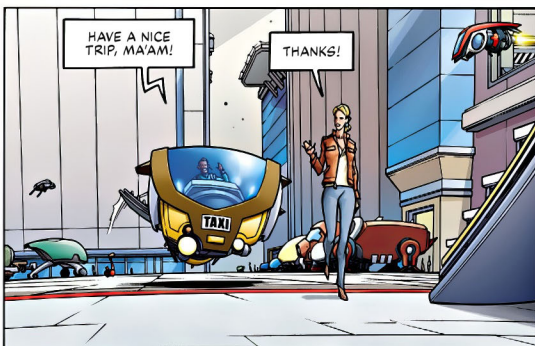
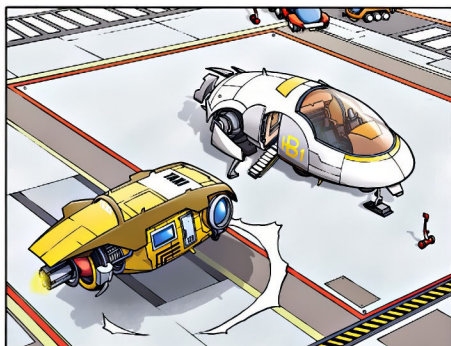
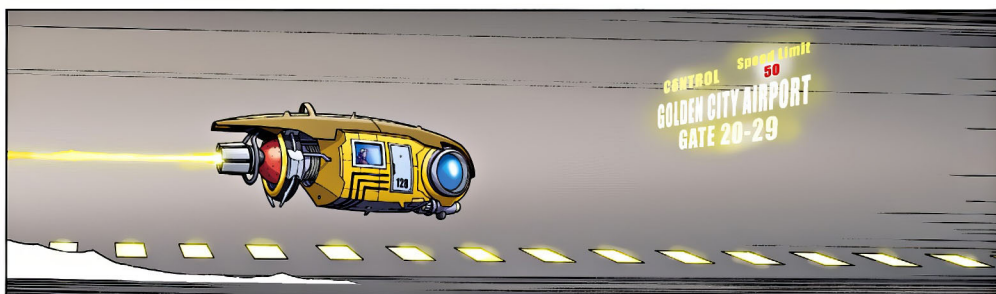


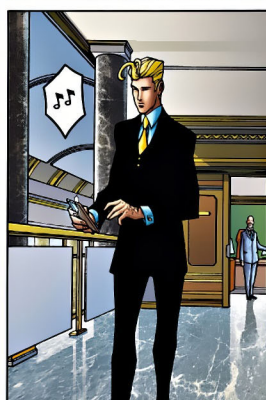
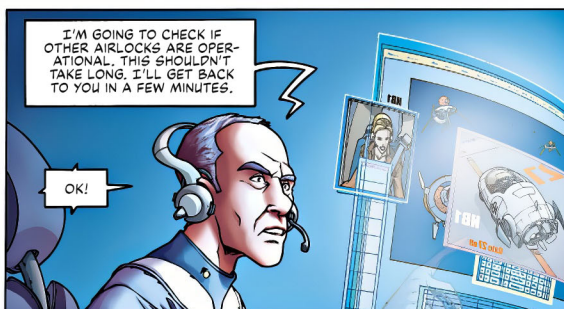
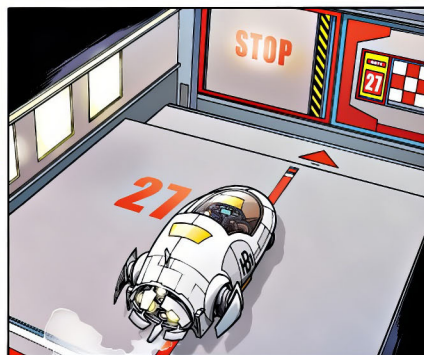
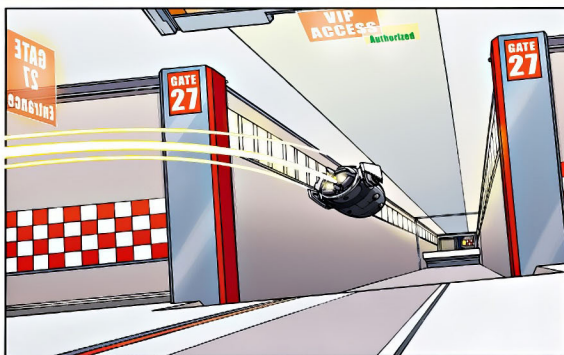
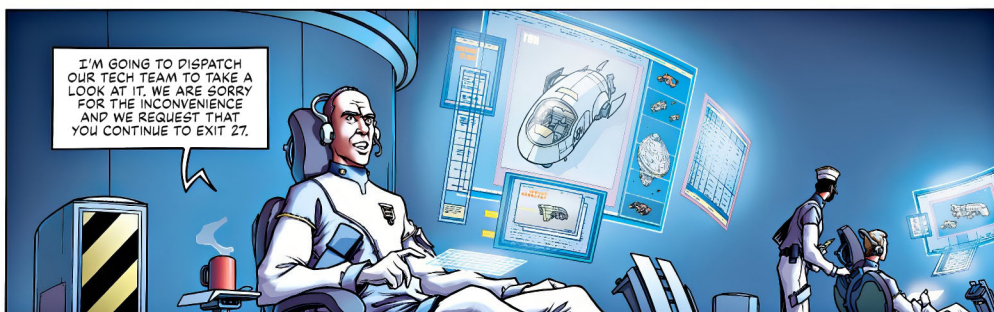
WANT ME TO TAKE YOU TO THE AIRPORT?

NO, YOU'RE GOING TO BE LATE. I'LL CALL A TAXI.



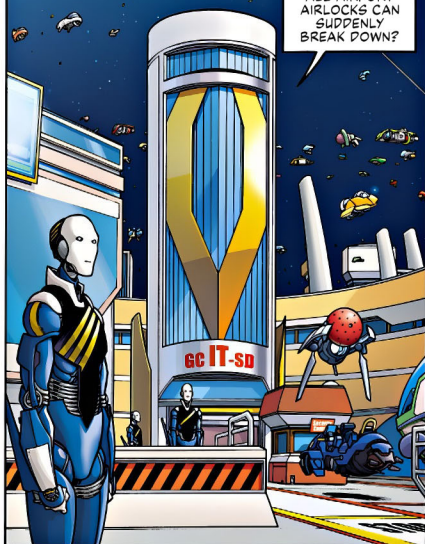






IT SECURITY DEPARTMENT, A FEW MINUTES LATER...

HOW IS IT POSSIBLE THAT ALL AIRPORT AIRLOCKS CAN SUDDENLY BREAK DOWN?

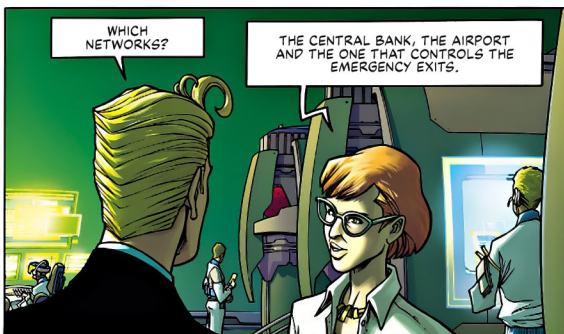


CYBERCRIMINALS HACKED INTO OUR NETWORKS AND CRIPPLED THEM WITH VIRUSES UNKNOWN TO OUR SERVICES.



WHICH NETWORKS?

THE CENTRAL BANK, THE AIRPORT AND THE ONE THAT CONTROLS THE EMERGENCY EXITS.



ALL EMERGENCY EXITS? INCLUDING THOSE USED TO EVACUATE PEOPLE IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE?

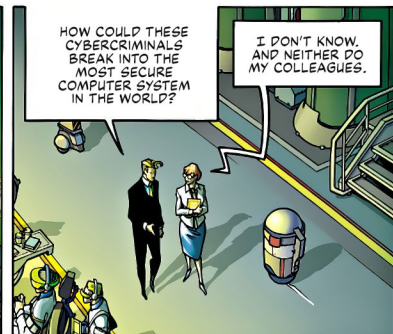


YES, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO LEAVE OR ENTER GOLDEN CITY AT THIS TIME.



HOW COULD THESE CYBERCRIMINALS BREAK INTO THE MOST SECURE COMPUTER SYSTEM IN THE WORLD?

I DON'T KNOW, AND NEITHER DO MY COLLEAGUES.



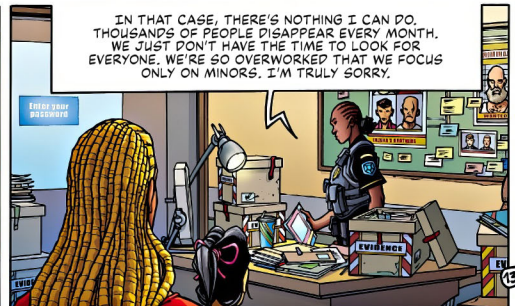
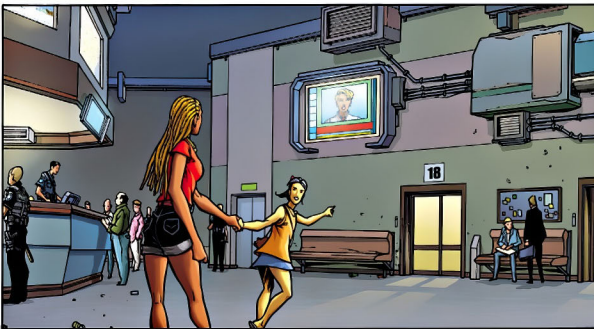
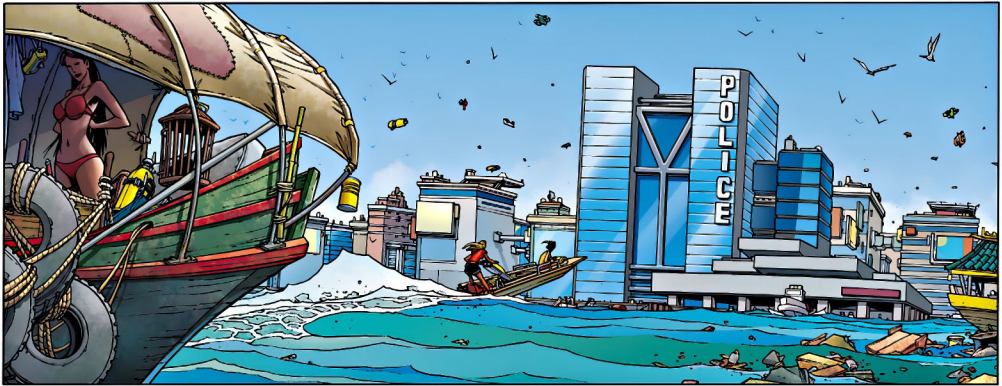
OUR BEST HACKERS ARE CURRENTLY TRYING TO IDENTIFY AND NEUTRALIZE THE VIRUSES INFECTING OUR NETWORKS.

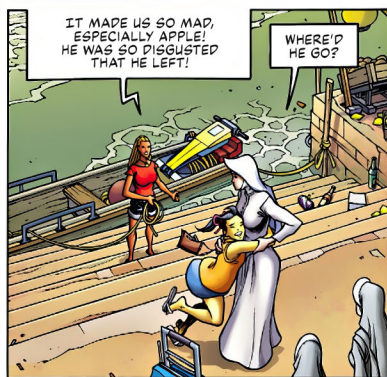
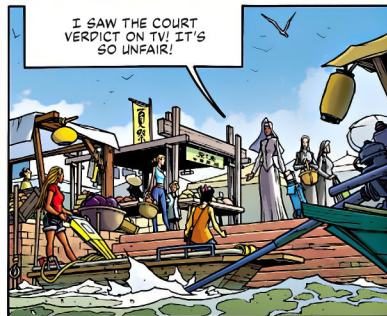
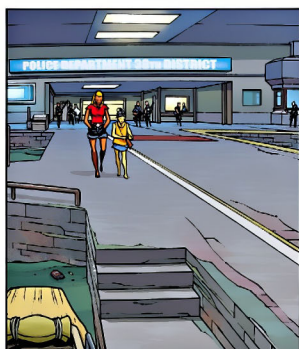
HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE THEM TO IDENTIFY THESE VIRUSES?



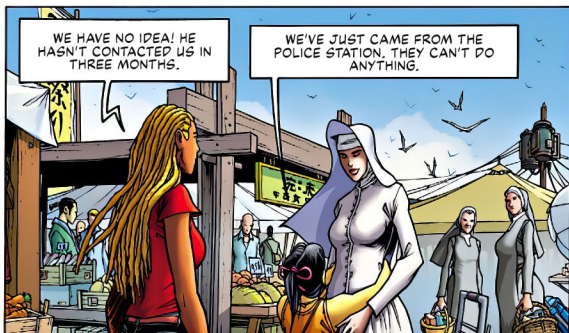
ONE TO TWO WEEKS, POSSIBLY LONGER. MR. MAYOR, I CAN'T GIVE YOU A STRAIGHT ANSWER, AND I CAN'T PROMISE THEY'LL BE ABLE TO IDENTIFY THEM!



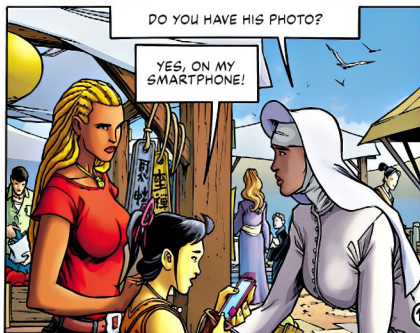




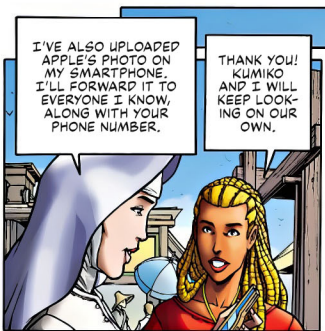
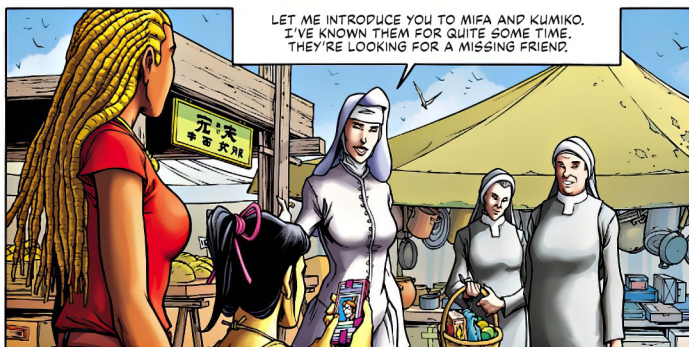
WHERE'D HE GO?

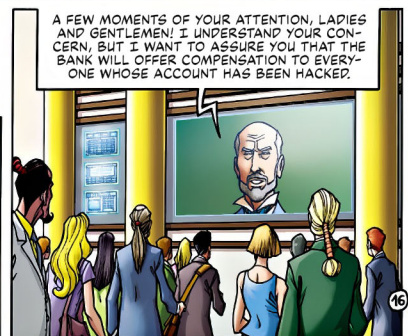
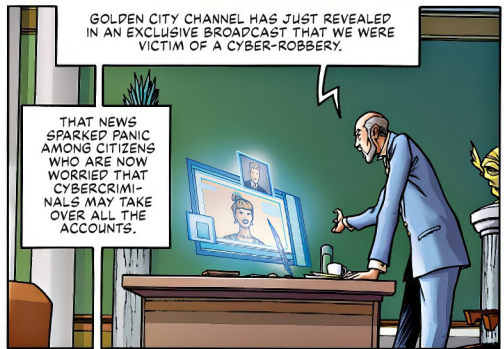
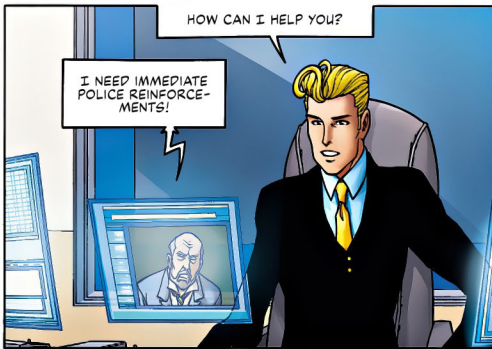
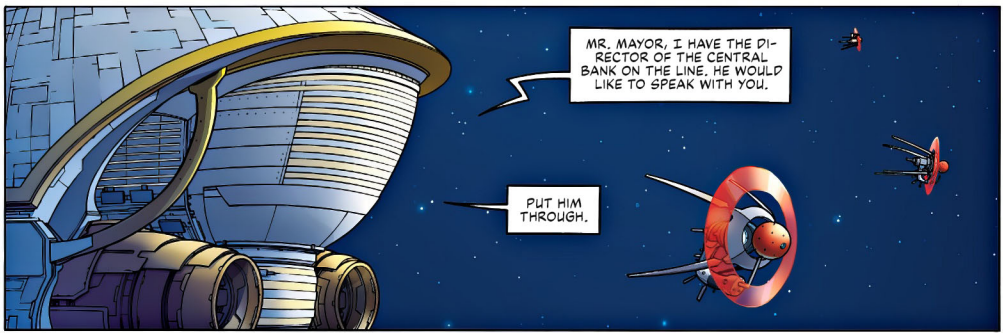


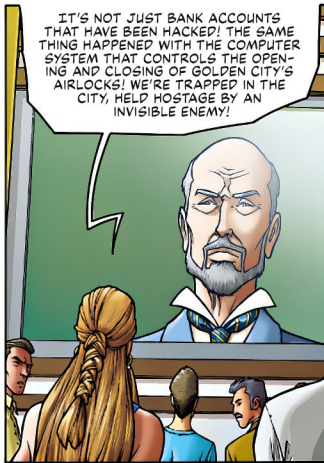
WE'VE JUST CAME FROM THE POLICE STATION. THEY CAN'T DO ANYTHING.



YES, ON MY SMARTPHONE!







IT'S NOT JUST BANK ACCOUNTS THAT HAVE BEEN HACKED! THE SAME THING HAPPENED WITH THE COMPUTER SYSTEM THAT CONTROLS THE OPENING AND CLOSING OF GOLDEN CITY'S AIRLOCKS! WE'RE TRAPPED IN THE CITY, HELD HOSTAGE BY AN INVISIBLE ENEMY!



IS... IS THAT TRUE?

ARE... ARE YOU SURE?

YES!

WHO TOLD YOU THAT?



MY HUSBAND! I JUST GOT A CALL FROM HIM. HE WORKS AT THE AIRPORT.

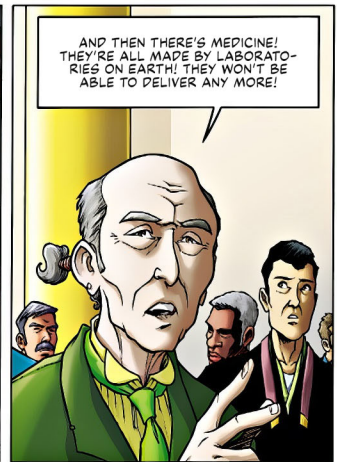


IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO GET IN OR OUT OF THE CITY!

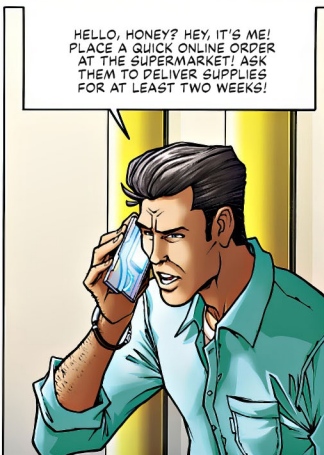
THIS IS TERRIBLE! EARTH WILL NO LONGER PROVIDE US WITH FRESH PRODUCE!

IF THE MALFUNCTION DOESN'T GET FIXED, WE'LL SOON BE RUNNING OUT OF FRUIT, VEGETABLES AND DAIRY PRODUCTS!

AND MEAT!



AND THEN THERE'S MEDICINE! THEY'RE ALL MADE BY LABORATORIES ON EARTH! THEY WON'T BE ABLE TO DELIVER ANY MORE!



HELLO, HONEY? HEY, IT'S ME! PLACE A QUICK ONLINE ORDER AT THE SUPERMARKET! ASK THEM TO DELIVER SUPPLIES FOR AT LEAST TWO WEEKS!



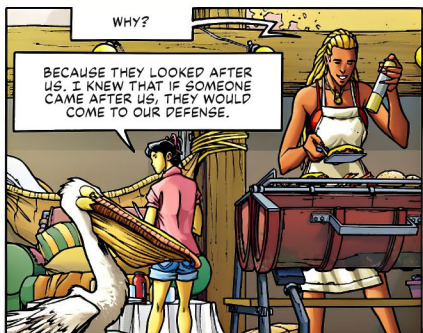
WHAT? NO, NO, GO STRAIGHT TO THE MARKET! THERE'LL BE TOO MANY PEOPLE AT THE STORE! BUY FROZEN GOODS, READY-MADE DINNERS, SUSHI, AND FRUIT! AND ORGANIC ICE CREAM FOR THE KIDS!



OH, AND DON'T FORGET TO GO TO THE PHARMACY TO RENEW YOUR PRESCRIPTION! YES, I KNOW YOU STILL HAVE SOME MEDICINE LEFT, BUT WE MAY RUN OUT, SO DO AS I SAY!

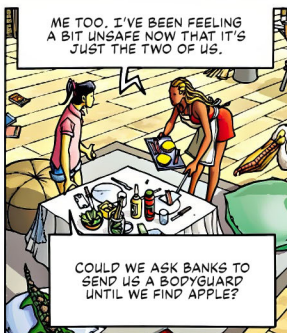


I'VE BEEN FREAKING OUT SINCE SOLO AND APPLE LEFT, ESPECIALLY AT NIGHT.



WHY?

BECAUSE THEY LOOKED AFTER US. I KNEW THAT IF SOMEONE CAME AFTER US, THEY WOULD COME TO OUR DEFENSE.



ME TOO. I'VE BEEN FEELING A BIT UNSAFE NOW THAT IT'S JUST THE TWO OF US.

COULD WE ASK BANKS TO SEND US A BODYGUARD UNTIL WE FIND APPLE?



DON'T BOTHER HIM WITH THAT!

WELL, WE CAN STILL GIVE IT A SHOT AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS!



HELLO? HARRISON?

OH, HE'S NOT HERE. I'M HIS SECRETARY. WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO DELIVER A MESSAGE?



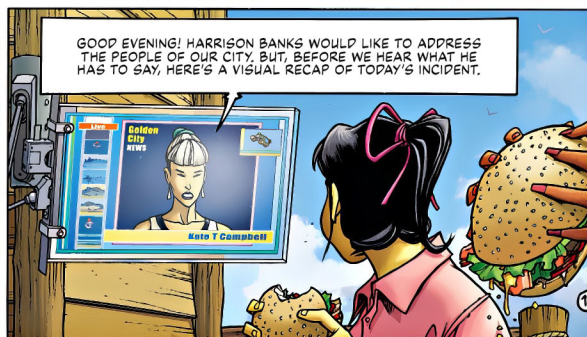
NO, I'D LIKE TO TALK TO HIM! WHERE IS HE?

IN GOLDEN CITY CHANNEL STUDIOS. HE'S ABOUT TO GIVE AN INTERVIEW DURING THE NEWS.

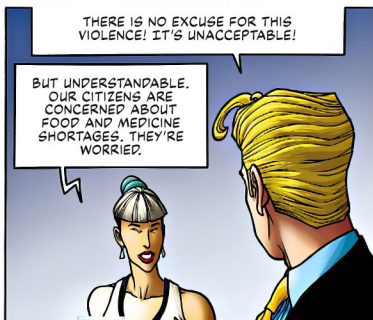
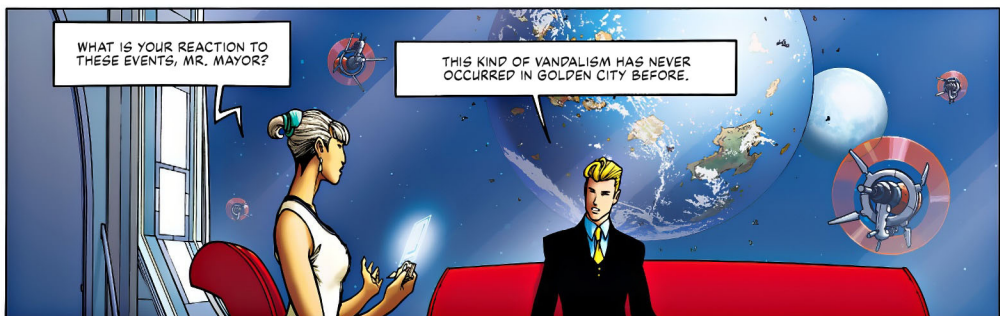
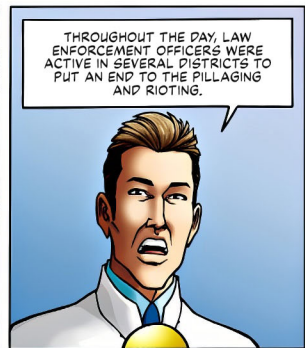
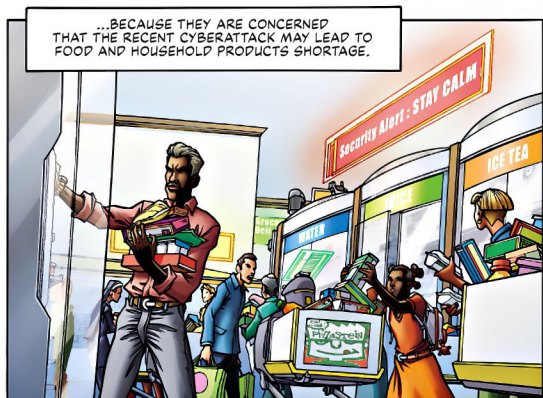


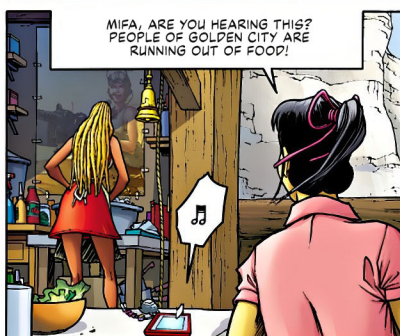
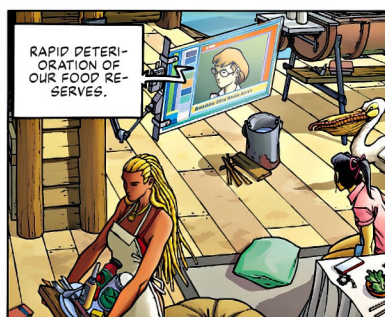
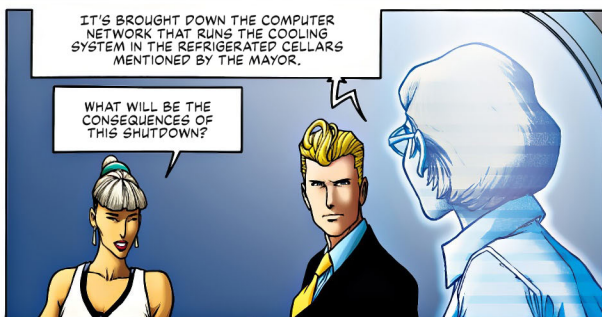
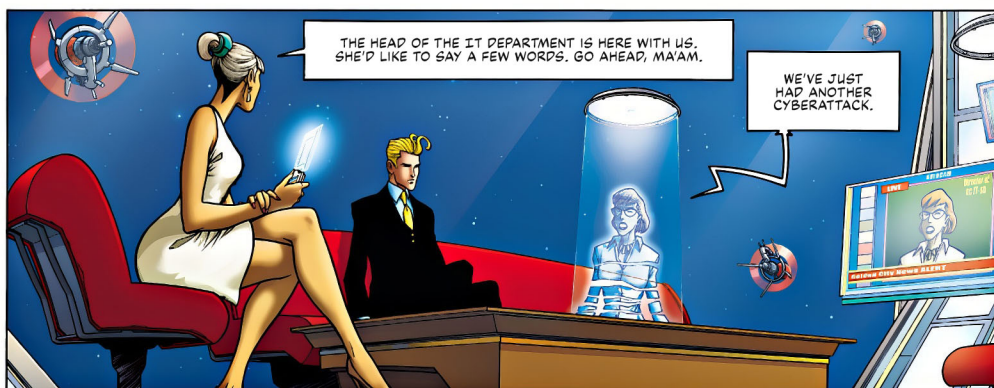
HARRISON IS ON THE NEWS! CAN I WATCH?

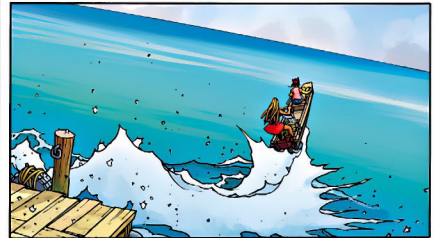
IF YOU WANT, BUT SIT DOWN AND EAT YOUR FOOD BEFORE IT GETS COLD.

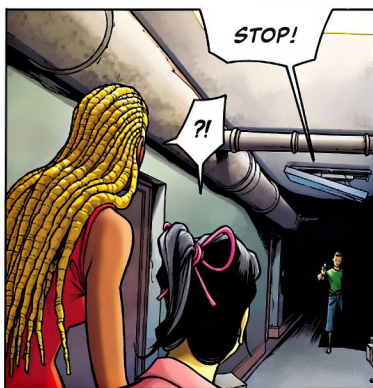
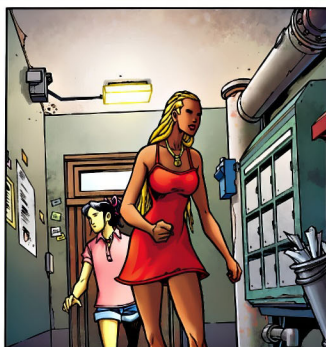


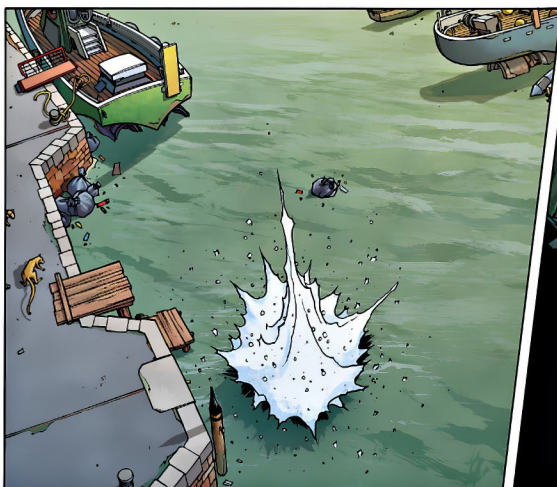
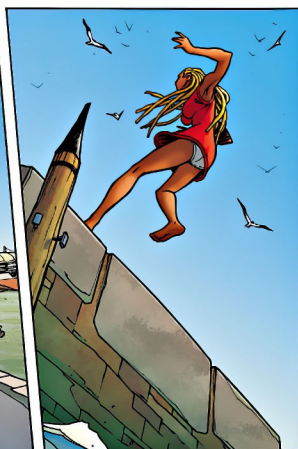
GOOD EVENING! HARRISON BANKS WOULD LIKE TO ADDRESS THE PEOPLE OF OUR CITY. BUT, BEFORE WE HEAR WHAT HE HAS TO SAY, HERE'S A VISUAL RECAP OF TODAY'S INCIDENT.

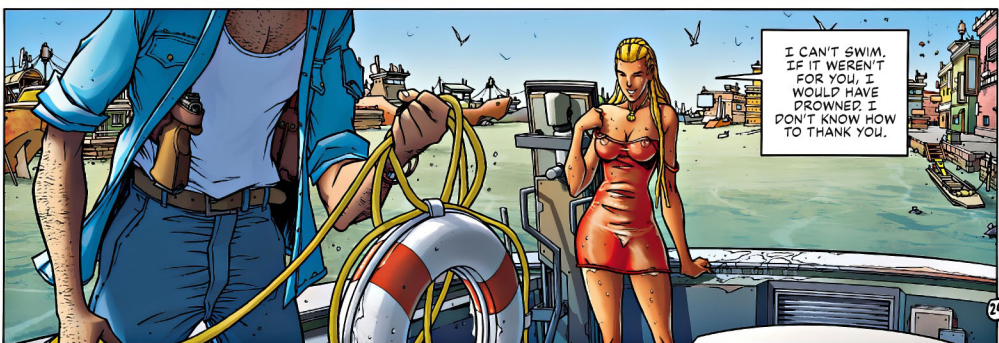
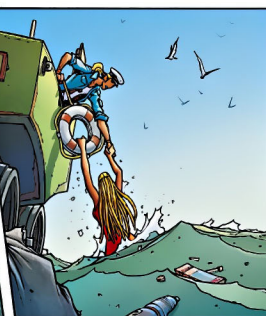
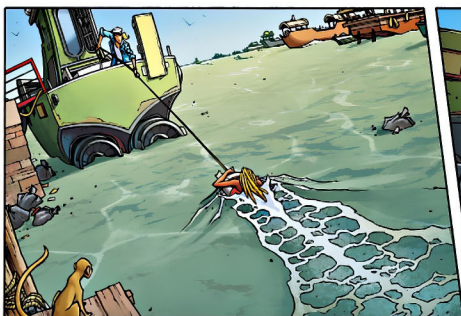
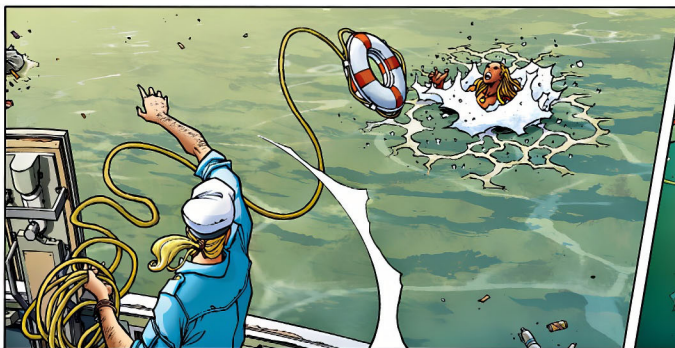


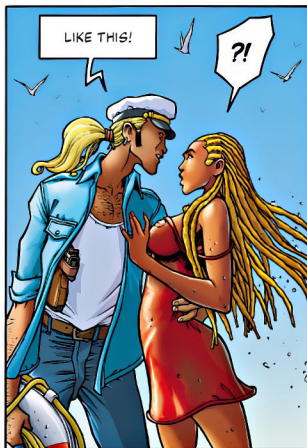






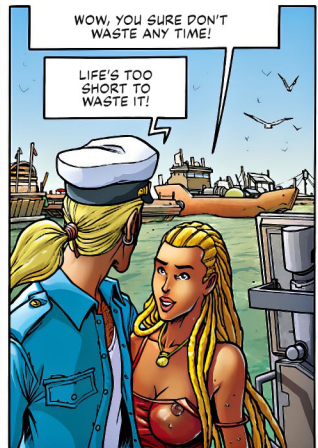
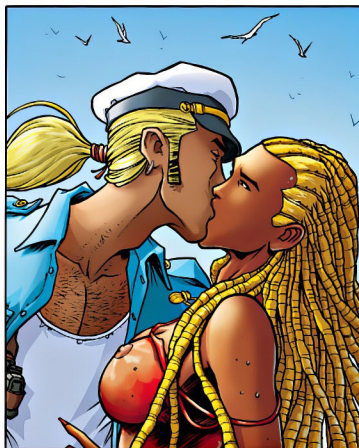






LIKE THIS!

?!



WOW, YOU SURE DON'T WASTE ANY TIME!

LIFE'S TOO SHORT TO WASTE IT!



IF YOU DON'T DO EXACTLY AS I SAY, YOURS IS GOING TO BE A VERY SHORT ONE!

MY... MY GUN!



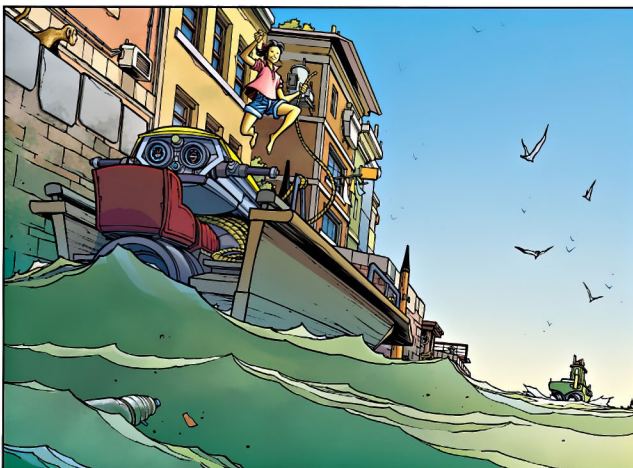
I SWIPED IT FROM YOU WHEN YOU KISSED ME.

START IT UP! NOW!



FOLLOW US, KUM!

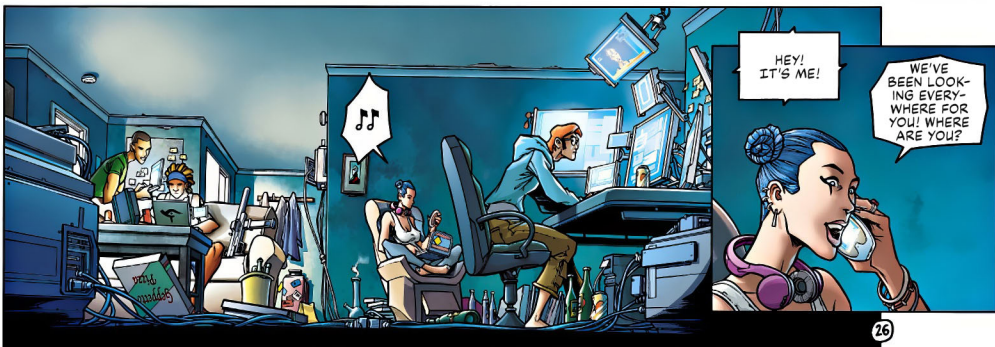
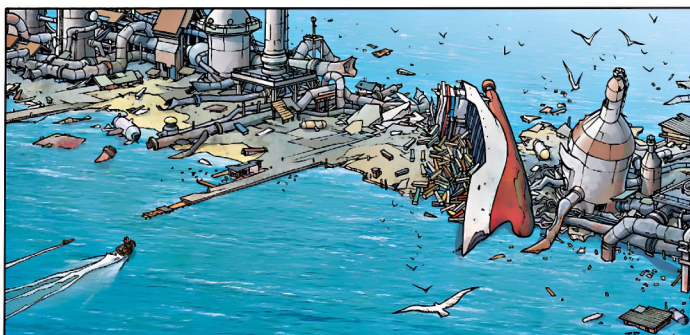
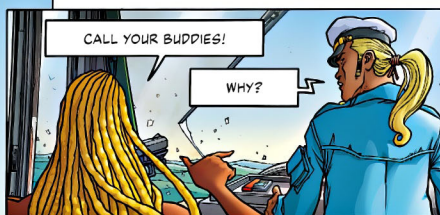
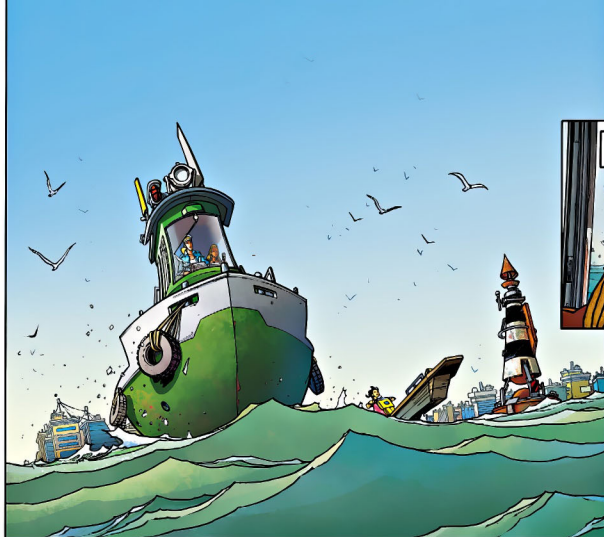
OK!

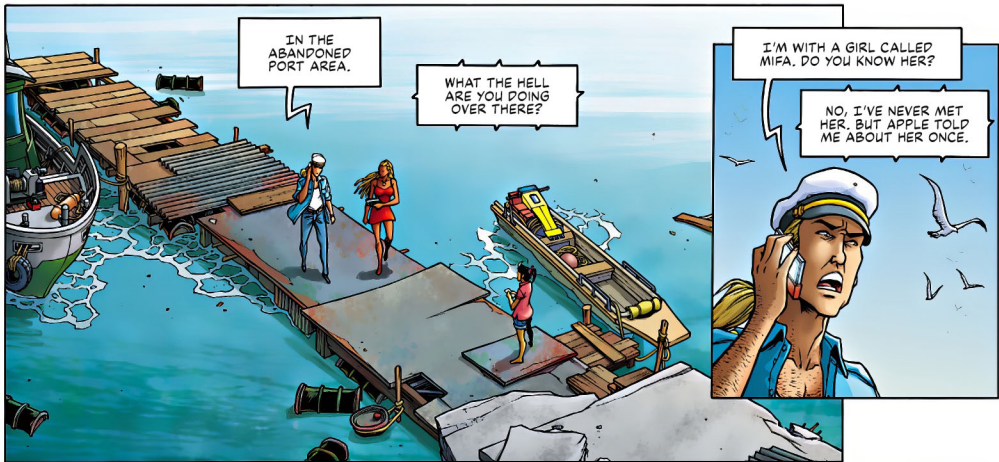


YOU'VE GOT A FUNNY WAY OF THANKING ME FOR SAVING YOU FROM DROWNING!

I FELL IN THE WATER ON PURPOSE. I SWIM LIKE A FISH.

25





IN THE
ABANDONED
PORT AREA.

WHAT THE HELL
ARE YOU DOING
OVER THERE?

I'M WITH A GIRL CALLED
MIFA. DO YOU KNOW HER?

NO, I'VE NEVER MET
HER. BUT APPLE TOLD
ME ABOUT HER ONCE.



SHE WANTS TO
SEE HIM! SHE'S
THREATENING TO
SHOOT ME IF HE
DOESN'T SHOW
UP SOON!



TELL HER TO RELAX!
WE'LL HOP IN A TAXI AND
MEET YOU THERE!

OK!
HURRY UP!



THEY'LL BE HERE IN A
FEW MINUTES.

TURN
AROUND!



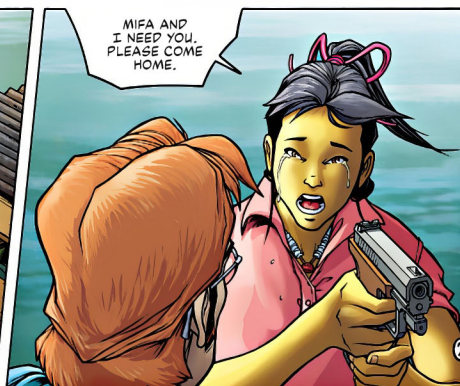
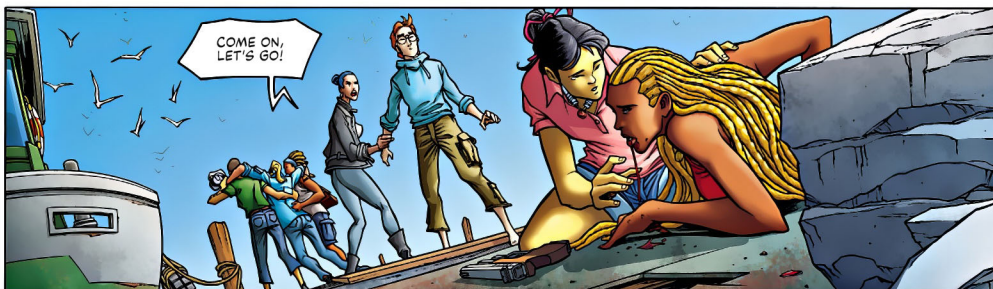
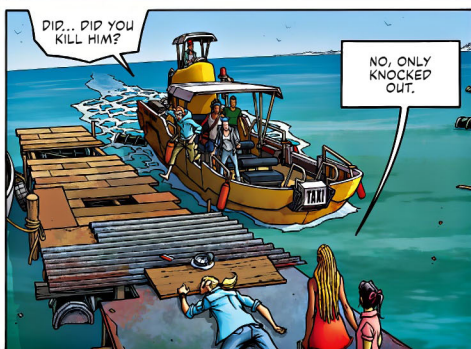
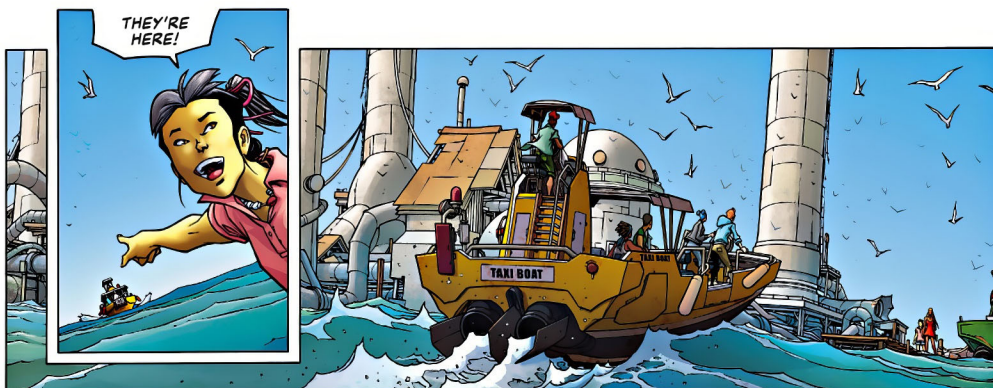
WHY?

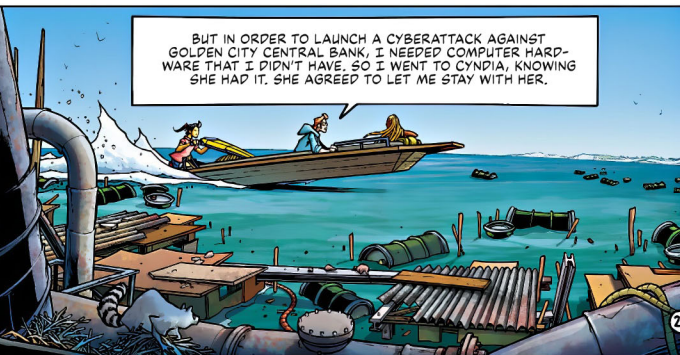
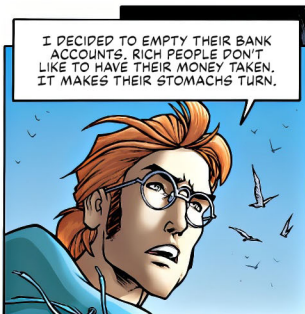
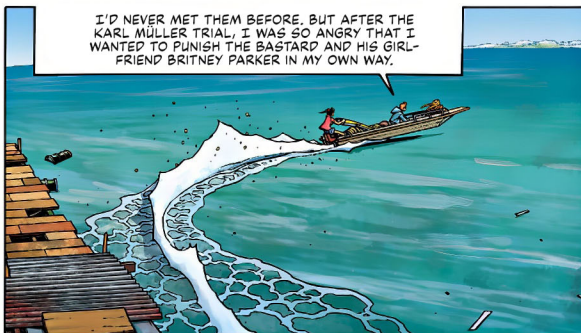
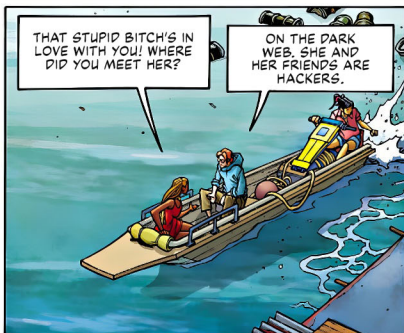
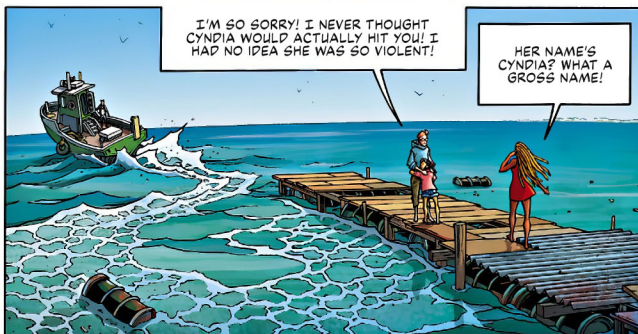
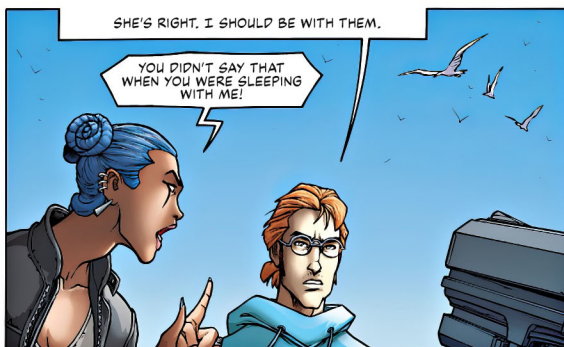
STOP ASKING
QUESTIONS! JUST
DO AS I SAY!

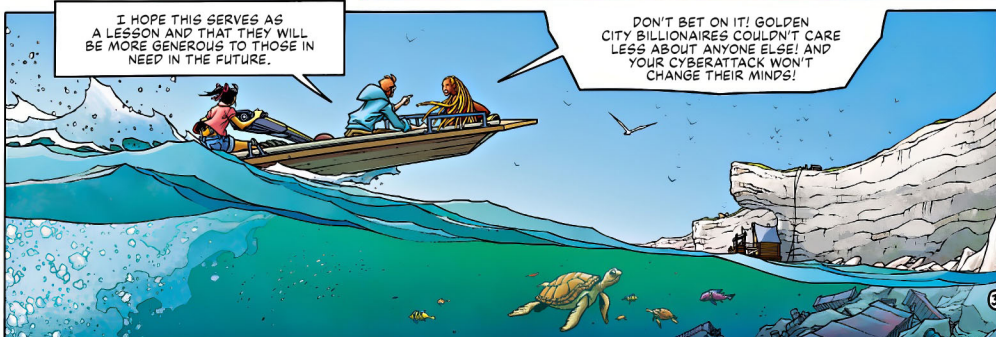
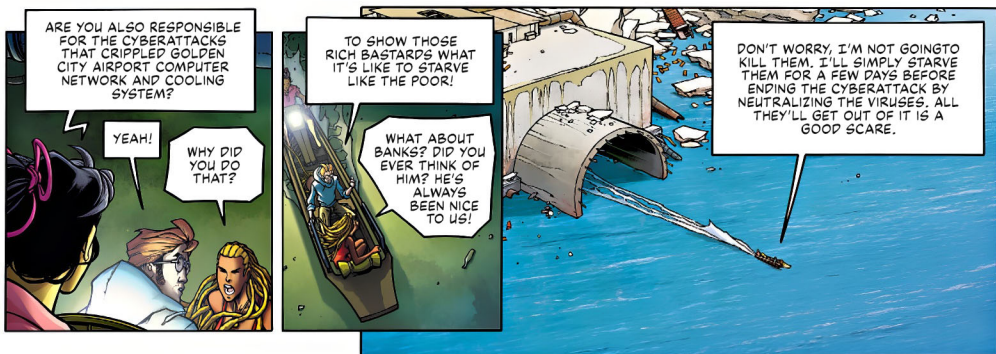
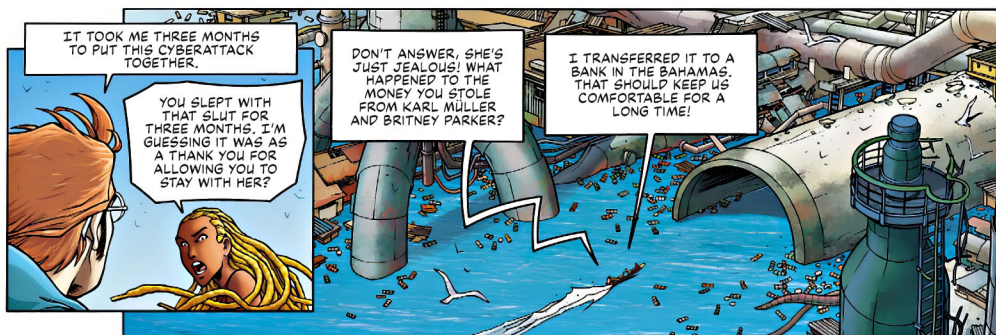


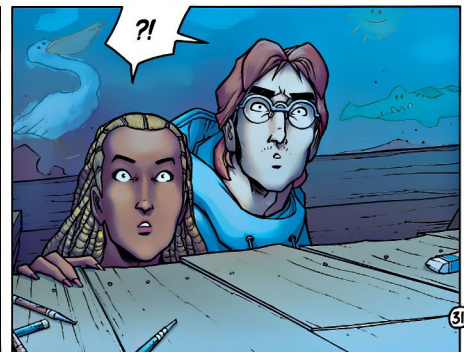
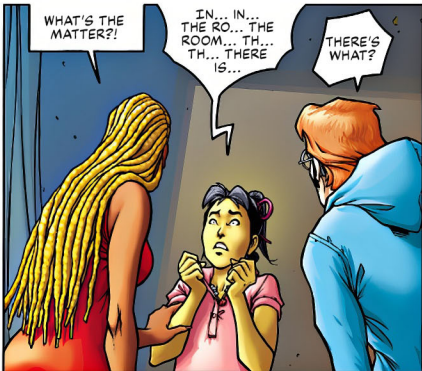
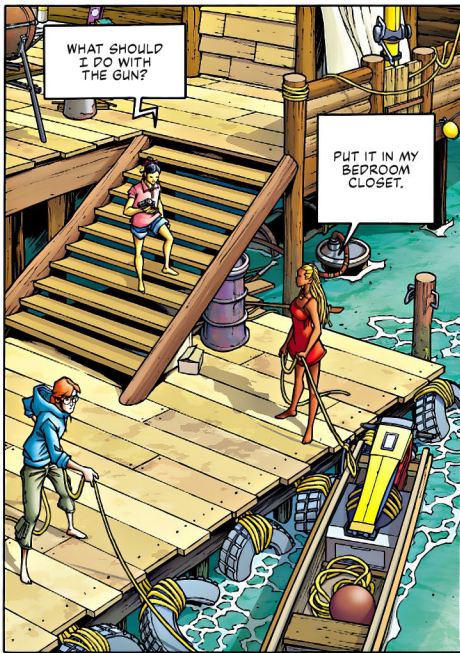
WHY'D YOU KNOCK HIM OUT?

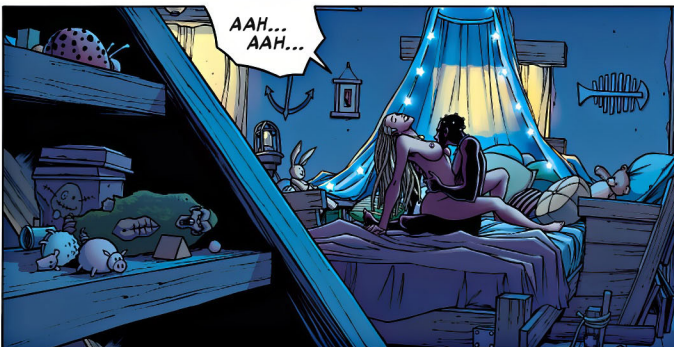
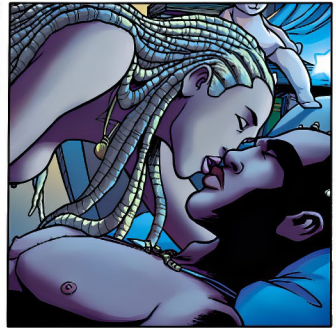
SO I WOULDN'T
HAVE TO DEAL WITH
HIM WHEN HIS BUD-
DIES SHOW UP. AND
SO I CAN USE THE
GUN IF I HAVE TO.

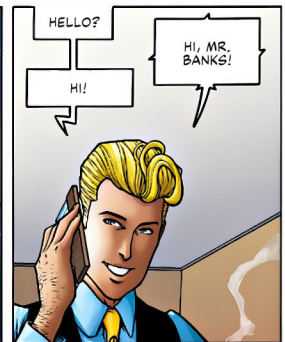
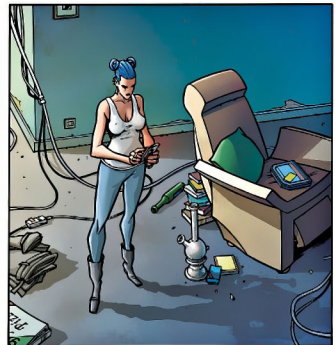
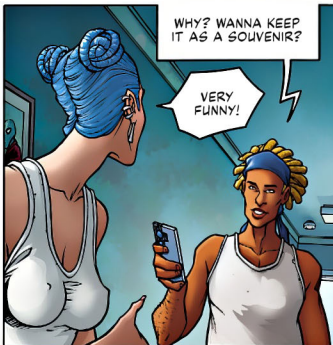


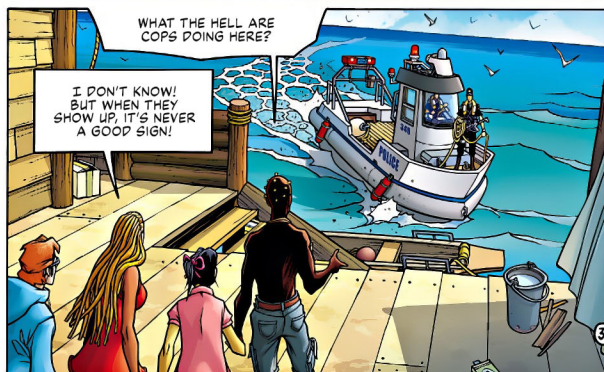
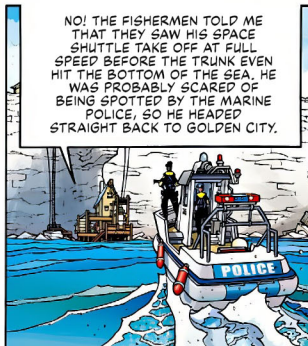
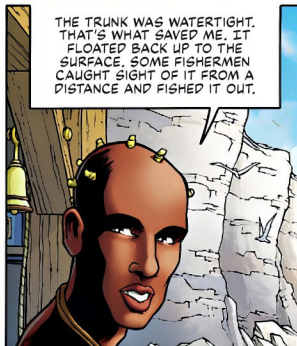
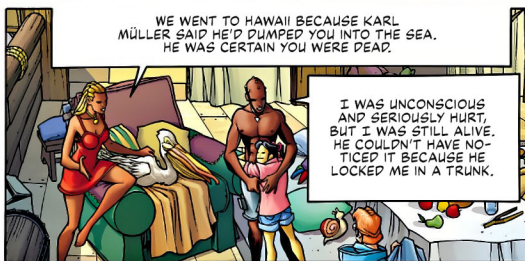




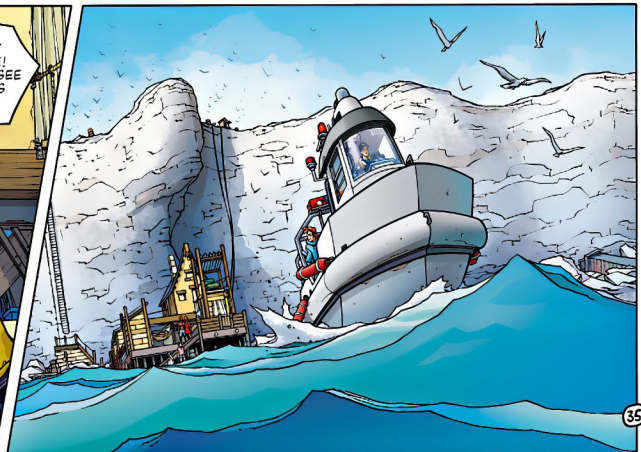
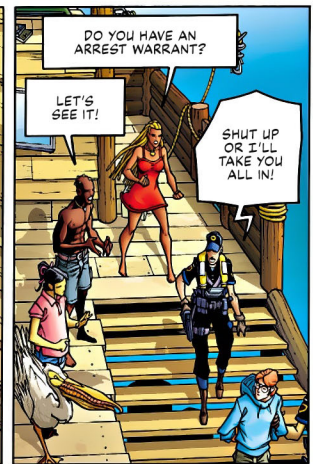
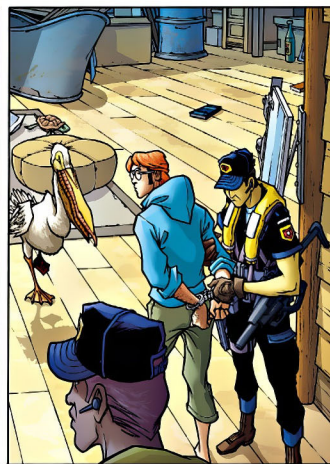


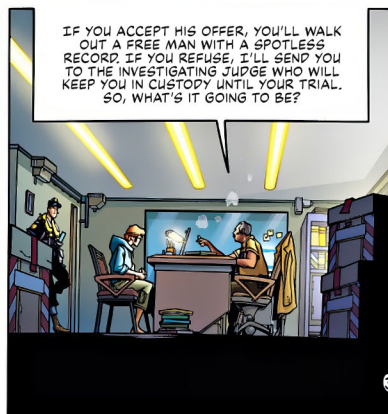
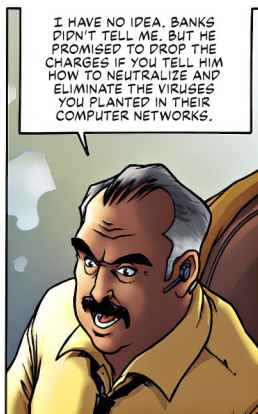
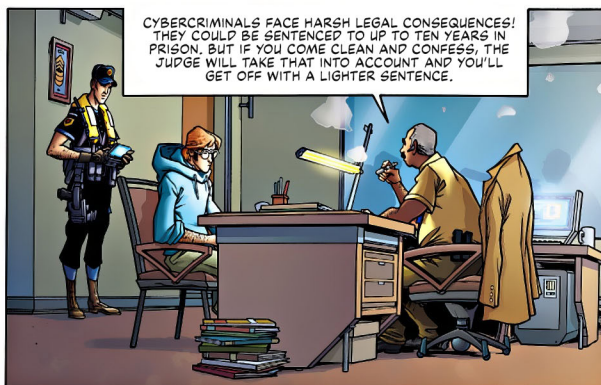
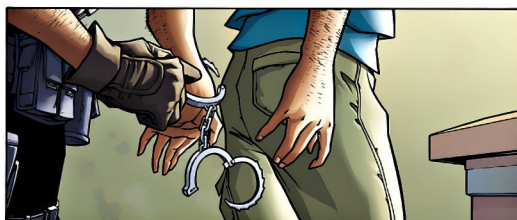
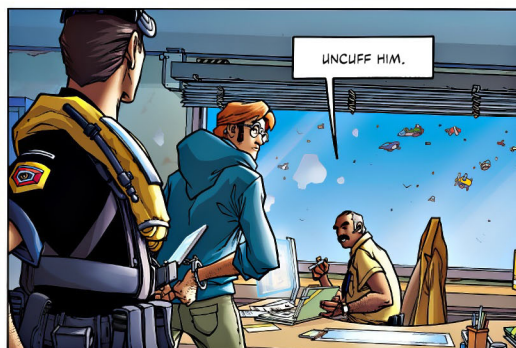






* READ VOLUME 13.







I AGREED TO BANKS' OFFER. HE ALSO INSISTED THAT I RETURN THE MONEY I STOLE.

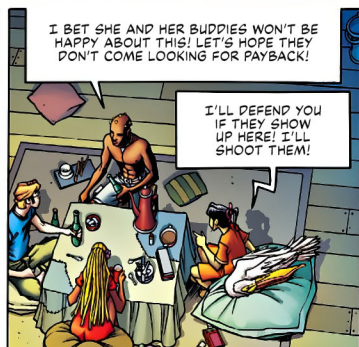


THE ONE YOU STASHED IN THE BAHAMAS?

YEAH, PLUS THE ONE I'D PLACED ON CYNTHIA AND HER FRIENDS' OFFSHORE BANK ACCOUNTS.



I'D LOVE TO SEE THE LOOK ON THAT COW'S FACE WHEN SHE REALIZES SHE HASN'T GOT A SINGLE DIME LEFT IN HER ACCOUNT!



I BET SHE AND HER BUDDIES WON'T BE HAPPY ABOUT THIS! LET'S HOPE THEY DON'T COME LOOKING FOR PAYBACK!

I'LL DEFEND YOU IF THEY SHOW UP HERE! I'LL SHOOT THEM!



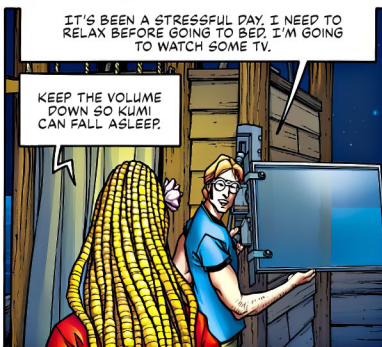
FINE, NOW GO TO SLEEP! IT'S LATE, YOU SHOULD ALREADY BE IN BED!

I'M GOING TO HIT THE SACK TOO, I'M EXHAUSTED. I STILL HAVEN'T RECOVERED FROM JET LAG.



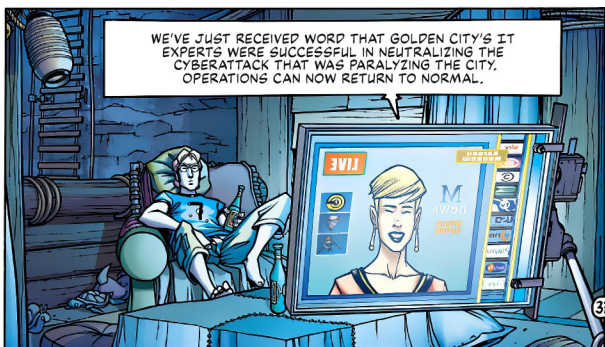
AREN'T YOU COMING TO BED, APPLE?

I'M NOT SLEEPY.



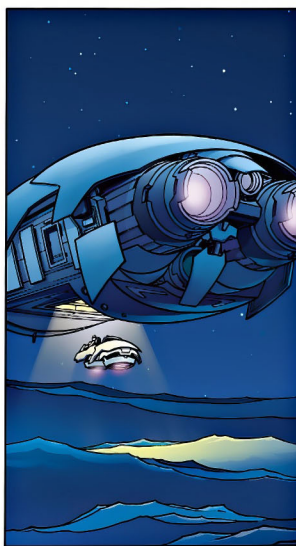
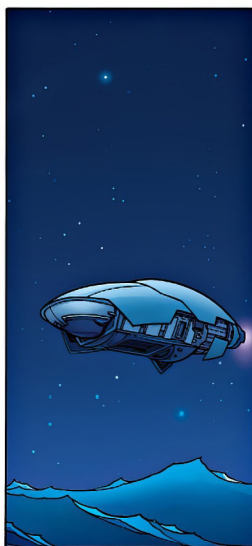
IT'S BEEN A STRESSFUL DAY, I NEED TO RELAX BEFORE GOING TO BED. I'M GOING TO WATCH SOME TV.

KEEP THE VOLUME DOWN SO KUMI CAN FALL ASLEEP.



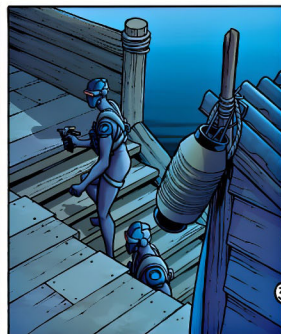
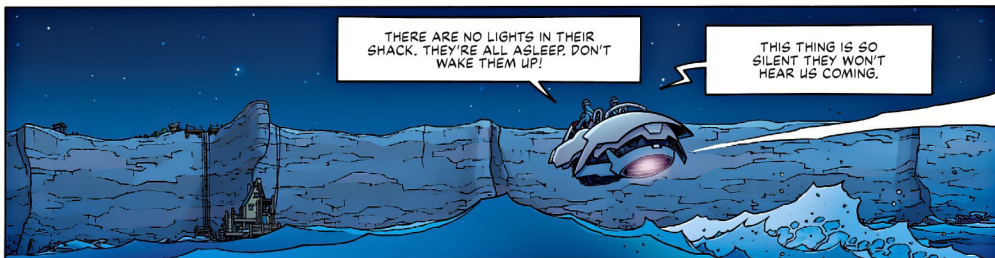
WE'VE JUST RECEIVED WORD THAT GOLDEN CITY'S IT EXPERTS WERE SUCCESSFUL IN NEUTRALIZING THE CYBERATTACK THAT WAS PARALYZING THE CITY. OPERATIONS CAN NOW RETURN TO NORMAL.

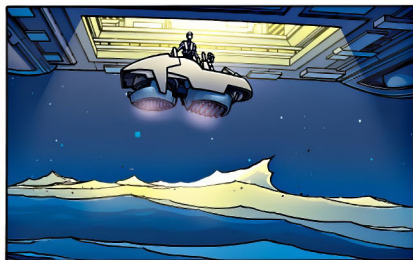
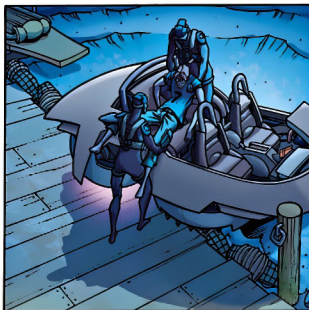
A FEW HOURS
LATER...

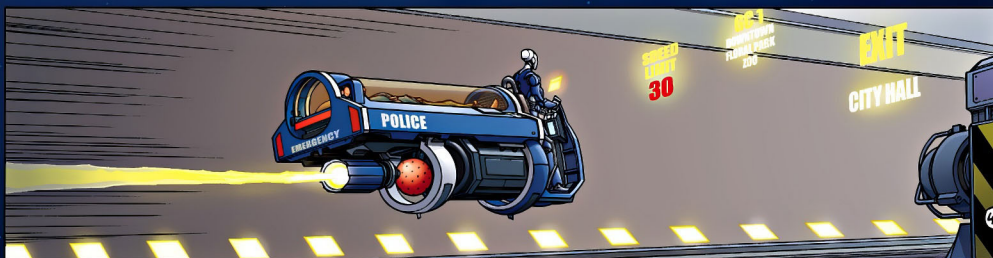
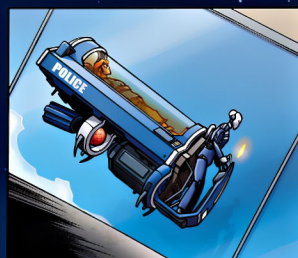
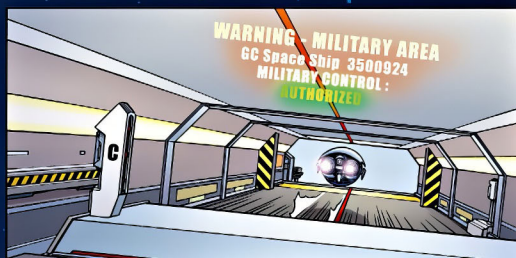
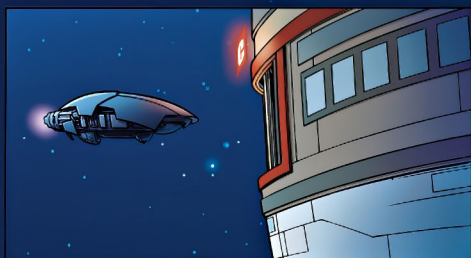


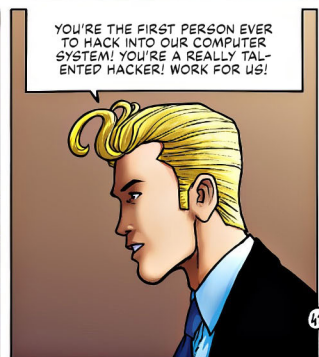
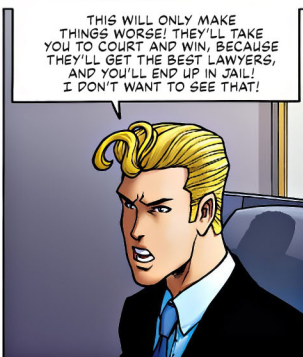
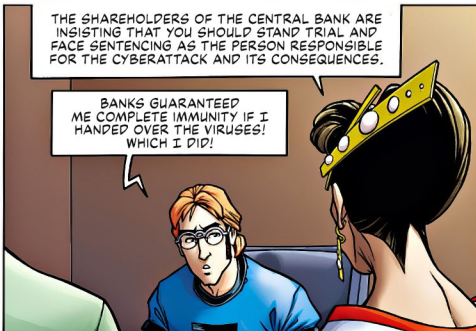
THERE ARE NO LIGHTS IN THEIR
SHACK. THEY'RE ALL ASLEEP. DON'T
WAKE THEM UP!

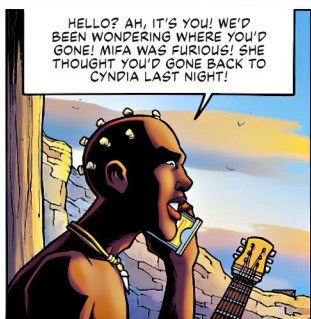
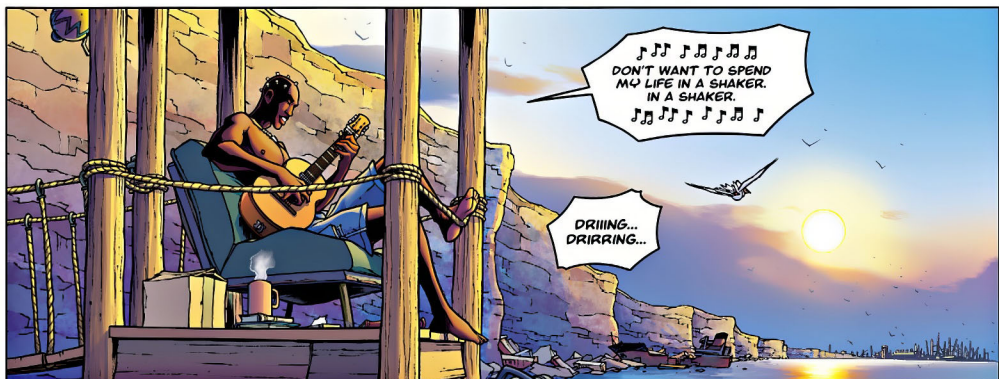
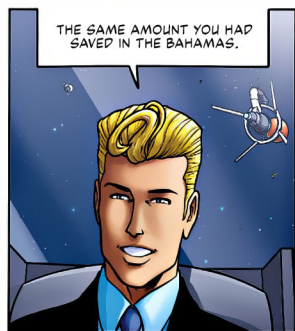
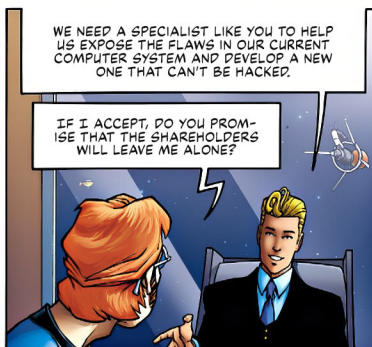
THIS THING IS SO
SILENT THEY WON'T
HEAR US COMING.

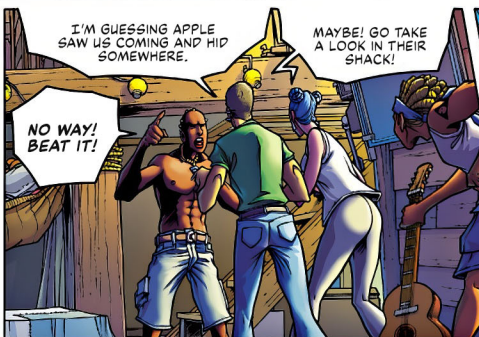
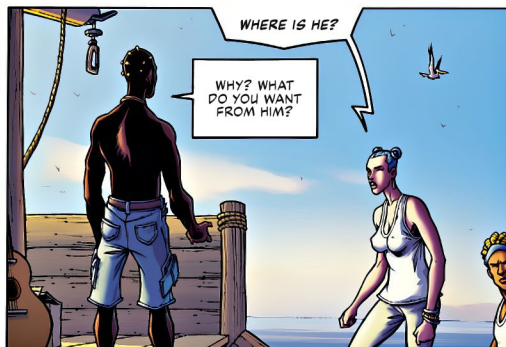
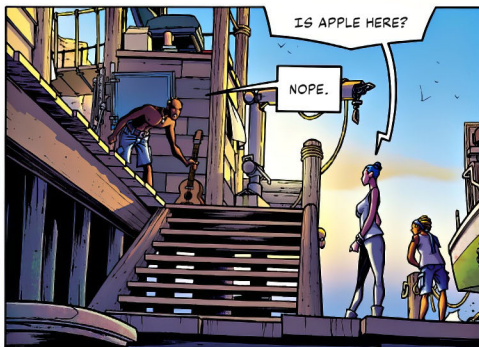
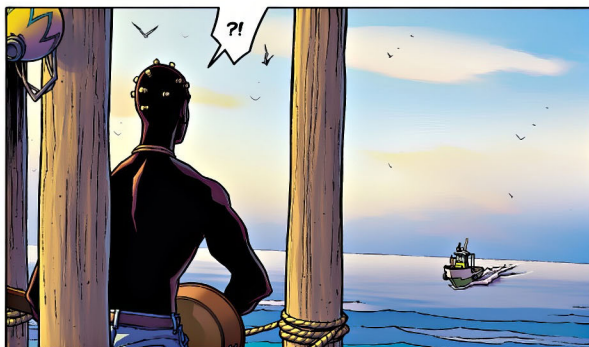


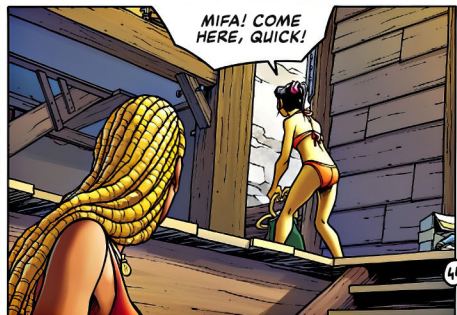
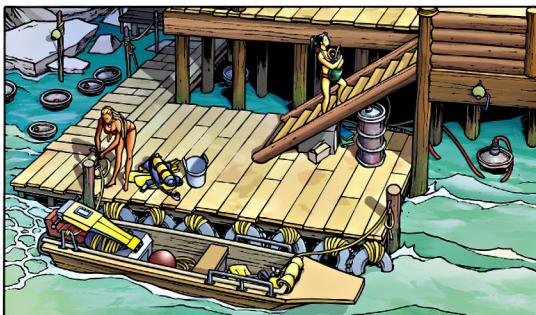
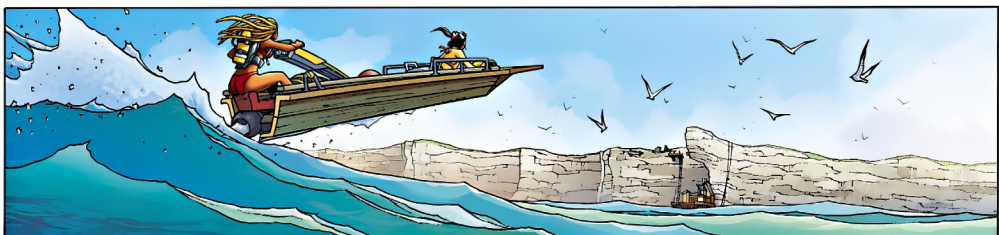
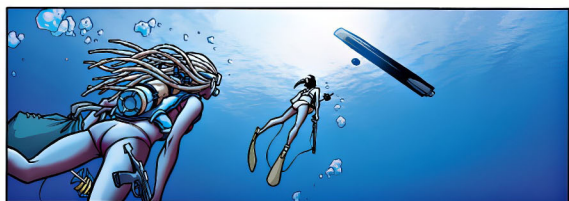
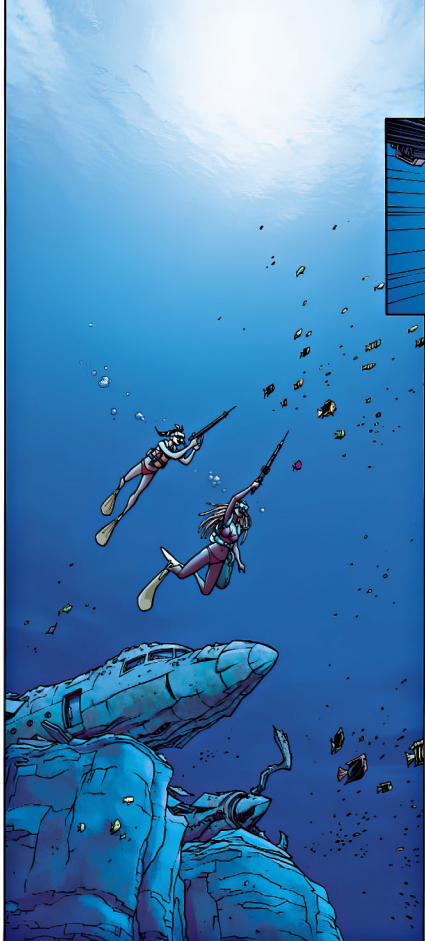


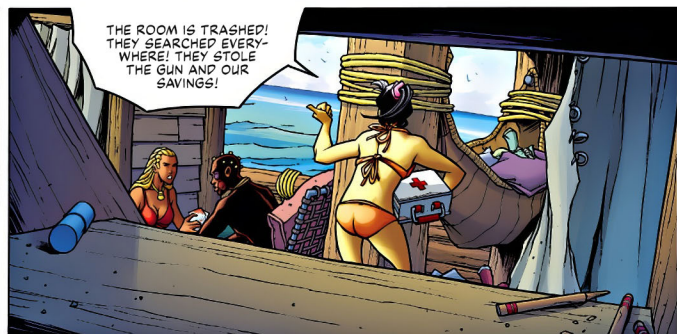
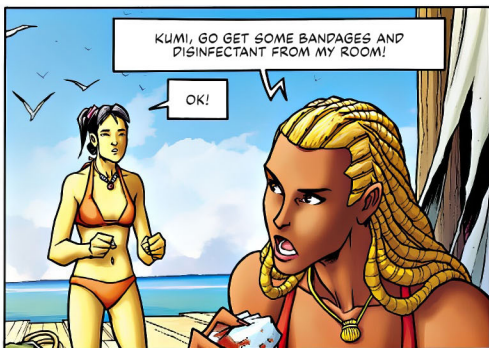
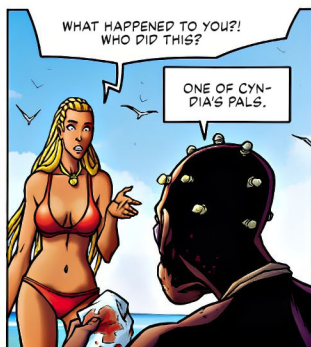
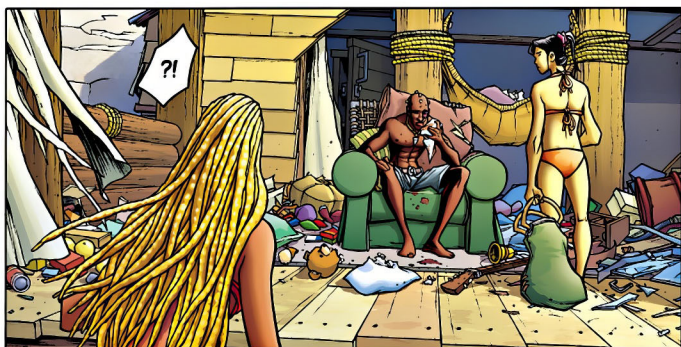






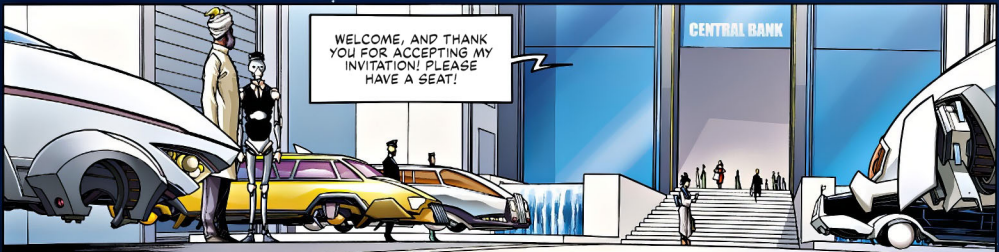






THE SHAREHOLDERS ARE HERE, MR. DIRECTOR.

ALRIGHT! TELL THEM TO JOIN ME IN THE MEETING ROOM!



WELCOME, AND THANK YOU FOR ACCEPTING MY INVITATION! PLEASE HAVE A SEAT!

CENTRAL BANK

I SENT YOU AN EMAIL NOTIFYING YOU OF BANKS' DECISION ON YOUNG APPLE. BUT I'D LIKE TO HEAR YOUR THOUGHTS, WHICH IS WHY I'VE INVITED YOU HERE.

I MUST ADMIT I WAS SURPRISED BY HIS DECISION! I WASN'T EXPECTING IT!

NEITHER DID I! I'M COMPLETELY BAFFLED! WILL THIS HACKER, AS GOOD AS HE IS, BE ABLE TO PROVIDE US WITH A TRULY IMPREGNABLE COMPUTER SYSTEM?

WE'LL HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE! IN ANY CASE, BEFORE SENDING HIM HOME, WE'LL NEED TO HIRE SKILLED PROFESSIONALS TO TEST THE COMPUTER SYSTEM HE'LL HAVE DESIGNED!



NO, WE CAN'T ALLOW HIM TO LEAVE! IT WOULD BE VERY DANGEROUS FOR US! AFTER HIS TIME HERE, HE'LL KNOW FAR TOO MUCH ABOUT OUR IT DEPARTMENT TO SIMPLY LET HIM WALK! WE'LL HAVE TO GET RID OF HIM!

YOU MEAN... FOR GOOD?

YES! OUR SAFETY IS AT STAKE!

WE WON'T TAKE ACTION IN GOLDEN CITY, BUT DURING HIS RETURN TO EARTH, OF COURSE, WE'LL HAVE TO MAKE HIS DEATH LOOK LIKE AN ACCIDENT. WE'LL DISCUSS THIS WHEN THE TIME COMES!

